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# PORTRAITS, AND BIOGRAPHIES

CONTAINED IN THIS VOLUME.

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A very faint, large watermark-like image of a classical building with four prominent columns is visible in the background.

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*UNDER THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF  
USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.*

THE

# GALLERY OF PORTRAITS:

WITH

## MEMOIRS.

VOLUME II.

LONDON:

CHARLES KNIGHT, 22, LUDGATE-STREET,  
AND 13, PALL-MALL EAST.

1833.

[PRICE ONE GUINEA, BOUND IN CLOTH.]



Engraved by J. S.

### LORD CHANCELLOR SOMERS

From a picture by Sir G. Kneller  
in the possession of the Royal Society

Under the superintendance of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge

## GALLERY OF PORTRAITS.

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JOHN SOMERS was born at Worcester, in an ancient house called the White Ladies, which, as its name seems to import, had formerly been part of a monastery or convent. The exact date of his birth cannot be ascertained, as the parish registers at Worcester, during the civil wars between Charles I. and his Parliament, were either wholly lost, or so inaccurately kept as not to furnish any authentic information. It appears probable, however, from several concurring accounts, that he was born about the year 1650. The family of Somers was respectable, though not wealthy, and had for several generations been possessed of an estate at Clifton, in the parish of Severn Stoke, in Gloucestershire. Admiral Sir George Somers, who in the reign of James I. was shipwrecked on the Bermudas, and afterwards died there, leaving his name to that cluster of islands, is said by Horace Walpole, in his 'Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors,' to have been a member of the same family. The father of Somers was an

attorney, in respectable practice at Worcester ; who, in the civil wars, became a zealous Parliamentarian, and commanded a troop in Cromwell's army.

Of the early education of Somers, we have only a meagre and unsatisfactory account. The house called the White Ladies, in which he was born, was occupied by a Mr. Blurton, an eminent clothier of Worcester, who had married his father's sister. This lady, having no son of her own, adopted Somers from his birth, and brought him up in her house, which he always considered as his home till he went to the university. He appears for some years to have been a day-scholar in the college-school at Worcester, which before his time had attained a high character for classical education, under the superintendence of Dr. Bright, a clergyman of great learning and eminence. At a subsequent period, we find him at a private school at Walsall in Staffordshire : he is described by a school-fellow as being then "a weakly boy, wearing a black cap, and never so much as looking out when the other boys were at play." He seems indeed to have been a remarkably reserved and "sober-blooded" boy. At a somewhat later period Sir F. Winnington says of him, that "by the exactness of his knowledge and behaviour, he discouraged his father and all the young men that knew him. They were afraid to be in his company." In what manner his time was occupied from the period of his leaving school until he went to the university, is unknown. It has been suggested that he was employed for several years in his father's office, who designed him for his own department of the profession of the law. There is no positive evidence of this circumstance, though the conjecture is by no means improbable. It cannot, however, be doubted that, during this period, he devoted much of his time to the study of history and the civil law, and laid in a portion of that abundant store of constitutional learning which afterwards rendered him the ornament of his profession, and of the age in which he lived. About this time also he formed several connexions, which had great influence upon his subsequent success in life. The estates of the Earl of Shrewsbury were managed by Somers's father ; and as that young nobleman had no convenient residence of his own in Worcestershire, he spent much of his time at the White Ladies, and formed an intimate friendship and familiarity with young Somers. In 1672 he was also fortunate enough to be favourably noticed by Sir Francis Winnington, then a distinguished practitioner at the English bar, who was under obligations to his father for his active services in promoting his election

as a Member of Parliament for the city of Worcester. Winnington is described by Burnet as a lawyer who had “risen from small beginnings, and from as small a proportion of learning in his profession, in which he was rather bold and ready, than able.” It is natural to suppose that such a man, feeling his own deficiencies, would readily perceive with what advantage he might employ the talents and industry of Somers in assisting him both in Westminster Hall and in Parliament. It was probably with this intention that Winnington advised him to go to the university, and to prosecute his studies with a view to being called to the bar.

In 1674 Somers was entered as a Commoner of Trinity College, Oxford, being then about three and twenty years of age. The particulars of his progress through the university are not recorded; but here, as at school, his contemporaries could perceive few indications of those splendid talents which afterwards raised him to such extraordinary eminence. His college exercises, some of which are still extant, are said to have been in no respect remarkable; and he quitted the university without acquiring any academical honours beyond his Bachelor’s degree. Mr. Somers was called to the bar in 1676, by the Society of the Middle Temple; but he continued his residence at the university for several years afterwards, and did not remove to London until the year after his father’s death, in 1681, upon which event he succeeded to his paternal estate at Severn Stoke. During his residence at Oxford he had the advantage of being introduced by the Earl of Shrewsbury and Sir F. Winnington to many of the patriotic opponents of the arbitrary measures of the Court. At this time he published several tracts, which sufficiently displayed to the world his familiar and accurate knowledge of constitutional history. His first acknowledged work was the Report of an Election Case, and is entitled ‘The Memorable Case of Denzil Onslow, Esq., tried at the Assizes in Surrey, July 20, 1681, touching his election at Haslemere in Surrey.’ His next performance was ‘A Brief History of the Succession, collected out of the Records and the most authentic Historians.’ This work was written at the time when the proposal to bring in a Bill to exclude the Duke of York from the succession occupied universal attention, and excited the most intense interest. The object of Mr. Somers’s tract was to exhibit the principles upon which the Parliament of England has authority to alter, restrain, and qualify the right of succession to the Crown; and he places the historical arguments in support of this proposition in a forcible and convincing light. Indeed, though it

might be difficult to justify such a proposition by abstract arguments upon what is called the theory of the British Constitution, it has been so repeatedly acted upon in several periods of our history, that even in the time of Charles II. the practice had, as Somers justly contended, to all intents and purposes established and sanctioned the principle. An excellent tract upon the same subject, entitled ‘A just and modest Vindication of the two last Parliaments,’ which appeared shortly after the breaking up of the Oxford Parliament in March, 1681, has been partly ascribed to Somers. Burnet says that this tract, which he characterizes as “the best writ paper in all that time,” was at first penned by Algernon Sidney, but that a new draught was made by Somers, which was corrected by Sir William Jones. Upon occasion of the attempt of the Court party in 1681, by the illegal examination of witnesses under the direction of the King’s Counsel in open court, to induce a grand jury at the Old Bailey to find a true bill for high treason against the Earl of Shaftsbury, Mr. Somers wrote his celebrated tract entitled ‘The Security of Englishmen’s Lives, or the Trust, Power, and Duty of the Grand Juries of England explained.’ Of this work, Bishop Burnet says, “It passed as writ by Lord Essex, though I understood afterwards it was writ by Somers, who was much esteemed, and often visited by Lord Essex, and who trusted himself to him, and writ the best papers that came out in that time.” In later times, this work has been universally ascribed to Somers. During his residence at Oxford, Somers was not inattentive to polite literature; he published a translation of some of Ovid’s Epistles into English verse, which at the same time that it shows that he could never have borne so distinguished a rank as a poet, as he afterwards attained as a lawyer and statesman, is by no means a contemptible performance. His translations from Ovid, and a version of Plutarch’s Life of Alcibiades, are the only published proofs of his classical studies at Oxford.

In the year 1682 he removed to London, and immediately commenced an assiduous attendance upon the courts of law, which at that time was considered as the highway of the legal profession. Under the powerful patronage of Sir Francis Winnington, who had been Solicitor-General, and was then in the full stream of business, he rose with considerable rapidity into good practice at the bar. In 1683 he appeared as junior counsel to Winnington in the defence to an important political prosecution instituted against Pilkington and Shute, with several other persons, for a riot at the election of sheriffs for

the city of London. His employment in a case of so much public expectation may be taken as a proof that at that time his professional merits were in some degree appreciated; and in the reign of James II. his practice is said to have produced £700 a-year, which at that time was a very large income for a common lawyer of five years' standing. But such was the character for research and industry which he had attained within a very few years from the commencement of his professional career, that on the trial of the Seven Bishops in 1688, he was introduced as counsel into that momentous cause at the express and peremptory recommendation of Pollexfen, one of the greatest lawyers of that day. The rank of the defendants, the personal interest of the King in the question at issue, the general expectation excited by this conflict amongst all classes of the people, and above all, the event of the prosecution which drove James from his throne and kingdom, and immediately introduced the Revolution of 1688, render the trial of the Seven Bishops one of the most important judicial proceedings that ever occurred in Westminster Hall. It was no trifling testimony, therefore, to the high estimation in which Somers was held by experienced judges of professional merit, that he should be expressly selected by the counsel for the defendants to bear a part in the defence. We are told that upon the first suggestion of Somers's name, "objection was made amongst the Bishops to him, as too young and obscure a man; but old Pollexfen insisted upon him, and would not be himself retained without the other; representing him as the man who would take most pains and go deepest into all that depended on precedents and records\*." How far the leading counsel for the Bishops were indebted to the industry and research of Somers, for the extent of learning displayed in their admirable arguments on that occasion, cannot now be ascertained; his own speech, as reported in the State Trials, contains a summary of the constitutional reasons against the existence of a dispensing power in the King, expressed in clear and unaffected language, and applied with peculiar skill and judgment to the defence of his clients.

The intimate connexion of Somers with the leaders of that political party by whom the Revolution was effected, and in particular with his early friend Lord Shrewsbury, leaves little room for doubt that he was actively employed in devising the means by which that important event was brought about. It is said by Tindal that he was admitted into the most secret councils of the Prince of Orange, and was one of those

\* Kennett's Complete History, vol. iii. p. 513, n.

who planned the measure of bringing him over to England. Immediately upon the flight of James II., the Prince of Orange, by the advice of the temporary assembly which he had convened as the most proper representative of the people in the emergency of the time, issued circular letters to the several counties, cities, and boroughs of England, directing them to summon a Parliamentary Convention. On this occasion Mr. Somers was returned as a representative by his native city of Worcester. We find him taking a conspicuous part in the long and laborious debates which took place in that assembly respecting the settlement of the government. Upon a conference with the Lords upon the resolution, "that James II. having withdrawn himself out of the kingdom had abdicated the government, and that the throne had thereby become vacant," Mr. Somers spoke at great length, and with much learning, in support of the original resolution against some amendments proposed by the Lords. This resolution having been ultimately adopted by both Houses of Parliament, and the Prince and Princess of Orange having been declared King and Queen of England, a committee was appointed, of which Somers was a member, to bring in heads of such things as were necessary for securing the Protestant religion, the laws of the land, and the liberties of the people. The Report of this Committee, which was a most elaborate performance, having been submitted to the examination of a second committee, of which Somers was chairman, formed the substance of the Declaration of Rights which was afterwards assented to by the King and Queen and both Houses of Parliament, and thus adopted as the basis of the Constitution.

It is impossible to ascertain with precision the particular services rendered by Somers in the accomplishment of this great measure. There was perhaps no individual at that moment in existence who was so well qualified to lend important aid in conducting his country with safety through the difficulties and dangers of a change of government, and in placing the interests of the nation upon a secure and solid foundation. Fortunate was it for the people of England and their posterity that the services of a man of his industry and settled principles, of his sound constitutional information, and his rational and enlightened views of the relative rights and duties of kings and subjects, were at that critical juncture available to his country ; and that, at the instant of the occurrence of this momentous revolution, his character was sufficiently known and appreciated to render those services fully effective.

Shortly after the accession of William and Mary, Somers was appointed Solicitor-General, and received the honour of knighthood. Bishop Burnet says, that in the warm debates which took place in Parliament on the bill respecting the recognition of the King and Queen, and the validity of the new settlement of the government, it was strongly objected by the Tories that the convention, not being summoned by the King's writ, had no legal sanction ; and that Somers distinguished himself by the spirited and able manner in which he answered the objection. “ He spoke,” says Burnet, “ with such zeal and such an ascendant of authority that none were prepared to answer it ; so that the bill passed without more opposition. This was a great service done in a very critical time, and contributed not a little to raise Somers's character.”

In April, 1692, Sir John Somers became Attorney-General, and in the month of March following was appointed Lord-Keeper of the Great Seal. While he presided in the Court of Chancery as Lord-Keeper, he delivered his celebrated judgment in the Bankers' case, which Mr. Hargrave describes as “ one of the most elaborate arguments ever delivered in Westminster Hall.” It is said that Lord Somers expended several hundred pounds in collecting books and pamphlets for this argument. In 1697 he was appointed Lord Chancellor, and raised to the peerage, with the title of Baron Somers of Evesham.

In the year immediately succeeding his elevation to the peerage, it was the fate of Lord Somers to experience the virulence of party animosity, and the selfishness and instability of royal favour. His influence with the King, and the moderation and good sense with which he had restrained the impetuosity of his own party, had been long the means of preserving the Whig administration; and the Tories saw plainly that there were no hopes for the attainment of their objects so long as Lord Somers retained the confidence of the King. William had been, from the commencement of his reign, continually vacillating between the two parties according to the circumstances of his affairs ; at this period he was so incensed and embarrassed by the conduct of the contending parties in the House of Commons, that he readily listened to the leaders of the Tories, who assured him that they would undertake to manage the Parliament as he pleased, if he would dismiss from his councils the Lord Chancellor Somers, whom they represented to be peculiarly odious to the Commons. In fact, the Tory party in the House of Commons had, in the course of the stormy

session of Parliament which commenced in November, 1699, made several violent but ineffectual attacks upon the Lord Chancellor. The first charge brought against him was, that he had improperly dismissed many gentlemen from the commission of the peace: upon a full explanation of all the circumstances, this charge was proved to be so utterly groundless that it was abandoned by those who had introduced it. The second accusation had no better foundation than the first. Great complaints having been made of certain English pirates in the West Indies, who had plundered several merchant ships, it was determined to send out a ship of war for the purpose of destroying them. But as there was no fund to bear the charge of such an expedition, the King proposed to his ministers that it should be carried on as a private undertaking, and promised to subscribe £3,000 on his own account. In compliance with this recommendation, Lord Somers, the Duke of Shrewsbury, the Earls of Romney, Oxford, Bellamont, and several others, contributed a sufficient sum to defray the whole expense of the armament. Unfortunately one Captain Kidd was appointed to command the expedition, who was unprincipled enough to turn pirate himself, and having committed various acts of robbery on the high seas, was eventually captured, brought to England, and some time afterwards tried and executed for his offences. It was then insinuated that the Lord Chancellor and the other individuals who had subscribed towards the expedition were engaged as partners in Kidd's piratical scheme; so that an undertaking, which was not only innocent, but meritorious and patriotic, was construed by the blindness of party prejudice into a design for robbery and piracy. A resolution in the House of Commons, founded upon this absurd imputation, was rejected by a great majority. Shortly afterwards, after ordering a list of the Privy Council to be laid before the House, a question was moved in the House of Commons, "that an address should be made to his Majesty to remove John Lord Somers, Chancellor of England, from his presence and councils for ever." This motion, however, was also negatived by a large majority. The prosecution of these frivolous charges against Lord Somers was a source of perpetual irritation to the King, in consequence of the vexatious delay it occasioned to the public service, and the virulent party spirit which it introduced into the House of Commons; and it was under the influence of this feeling, and in order to deliver himself from a temporary embarrassment, that he selfishly determined to adopt the interested advice of the Tory leaders, and to remove the Lord Chancellor from his office. He accordingly intimated

to Lord Somers that it was necessary for his service that he should resign the seals, but wished him to make the resignation himself, in order that it might appear as if it was his own act. The Chancellor declined to make a voluntary surrender of the seals, as such a course might indicate a fear of his enemies, or a consciousness of misconduct in his office; upon which Lord Jersey was sent with an express warrant for the seals, and Lord Somers delivered them to him without hesitation.

The malignity of party spirit was not satisfied by the dismissal of Lord Somers from his office, and from all participation in the government. Soon after his retirement, namely in the year 1701, the celebrated Partition Treaties gave occasion to much angry debate in both Houses of Parliament. His conduct, with respect to these treaties, seems to have been entirely irreproachable; but it became the subject of much misrepresentation, and the most unreserved invective and abuse in the House of Commons. It appears that in 1698, when the King was in Holland, a proposal was made to him by the French Government for arranging the partition of some of the territories belonging to the crown of Spain upon the expected death of Charles II. This partition was to be made in certain defined proportions between the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, the Dauphin of France, and the Archduke Charles, the second son of the Emperor. The King entertained these proposals favourably, and wrote to Lord Somers, who was at that time Lord Chancellor, desiring his opinion upon them, and commanding him to forward to him a commission in blank under the great seal, appointing persons to treat with the Commissioners of the French Government. Lord Somers, after communicating with Lord Orford, the Duke of Shrewsbury, and Mr. Mountague, as he had been authorized to do, transmitted to the King their joint opinions, which suggested several objections to the proposed treaty, together with the required commission. This was the “head and front of his offending” in this respect; for the treaty was afterwards negotiated abroad, and finally signed without any further communication with Lord Somers.

Understanding that he was accused in the House of Commons of having advised and promoted the Partition Treaties, Lord Somers requested to be heard in that House in his defence. His request being granted, he stated to the House, in a calm and dignified manner, the history of his conduct respecting the treaties, and contended, with much force and eloquence, that in the whole course of that transaction he had correctly and honestly discharged his duty both as Chancellor and as a Privy Councillor. After he had withdrawn, a warm debate

ensued, which terminated in a resolution, carried by a small majority, "that John, Lord Somers, by advising his Majesty to conclude the Treaty of Partition, was guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour." Similar resolutions were passed against the Earl of Orford and Lord Halifax, and all of them were impeached at the bar of the House of Lords. The articles of impeachment against Lord Somers principally charged him with having affixed the great seal to the blank commission sent to the King in Holland, and afterwards to the treaties; with having encouraged and promoted the piracies of Captain Kidd; and with having received grants from the Crown for his own personal emolument. To each of these articles Lord Somers answered promptly and fully; to the two first he replied the facts of each case as above related; and in answer to the third, he admitted that the King had been pleased to make certain grants to him, but denied that they had been made in consequence of any solicitation on his part. After many frivolous delays and repeated disputes between the two Houses, a day was fixed for the trial of the impeachment; on which day the Commons not appearing to prosecute their articles, the Lords, by a considerable majority, acquitted Lord Somers of the charges and dismissed the impeachment.

The violence and folly exhibited in the conduct of these proceedings opened the eyes of the King to his error in having changed his ministry at so critical a time. He found to his infinite disquietude that instead of enabling him to manage the Commons as they had promised, the Tory leaders had rendered them more intractable and imperious than before; and that instead of sincerely endeavouring to promote peace abroad and quiet government at home, they were actuated entirely by motives of private passion and revenge. In this state of affairs he again directed his attention to Lord Somers, in consequence, probably, of the urgent advice of Lord Sunderland, and wrote him a note from Loo, dated the 10th of October, 1701, assuring him of the continuance of his friendship. By the united exertions of Somers and Sunderland a negotiation was entered into with a view to the formation of a Whig ministry; but after some little progress had been made, the death of the King, in March 1702, put an end to the project, and the succession of Queen Anne confirmed the establishment of the Tory administration.

The state of parties for some years after the accession of Queen Anne excluded Somers from taking any active part in political affairs. It is probable that at this period of his life he devoted his attention to literature and science, as in 1702 he was elected President of the

Royal Society. He afterwards applied himself with diligence to the removal of several gross defects in the practice of the Courts of Chancery and Common Law. In 1706 he introduced into the House of Lords an extensive and effectual bill for the correction of such abuses. In passing through the House of Commons “it was found,” says Burnet, “that the interest of under-officers, clerks, and attorneys, whose gains were to be lessened by this bill, was more considered than the interest of the nation itself. Several clauses, how beneficial soever to the subject, which touched on their profit, were left out by the Commons.” Still the Act “for the Amendment of the Law and the better advancement of Justice,” as it now stands amongst the statutes of the realm, effected a very important improvement in the administration of justice.

Lord Somers is said to have had a chief hand in projecting the scheme of the Union with Scotland ; and in discussing and arranging the details of this great measure in the House of Lords, he appears to have been one of the most frequent and distinguished speakers, though he was then labouring under great bodily infirmity.

In the year 1708, on occasion of the temporary return of the Whigs to power, Lord Somers again formed part of the administration and filled the office of President of the Council. But the powers of his mind were at this time much enfeebled by continual ill-health ; and it was probably with feelings of satisfaction that the change of parties in 1710, by causing his dismissal from office, enabled him finally to retire into private life.

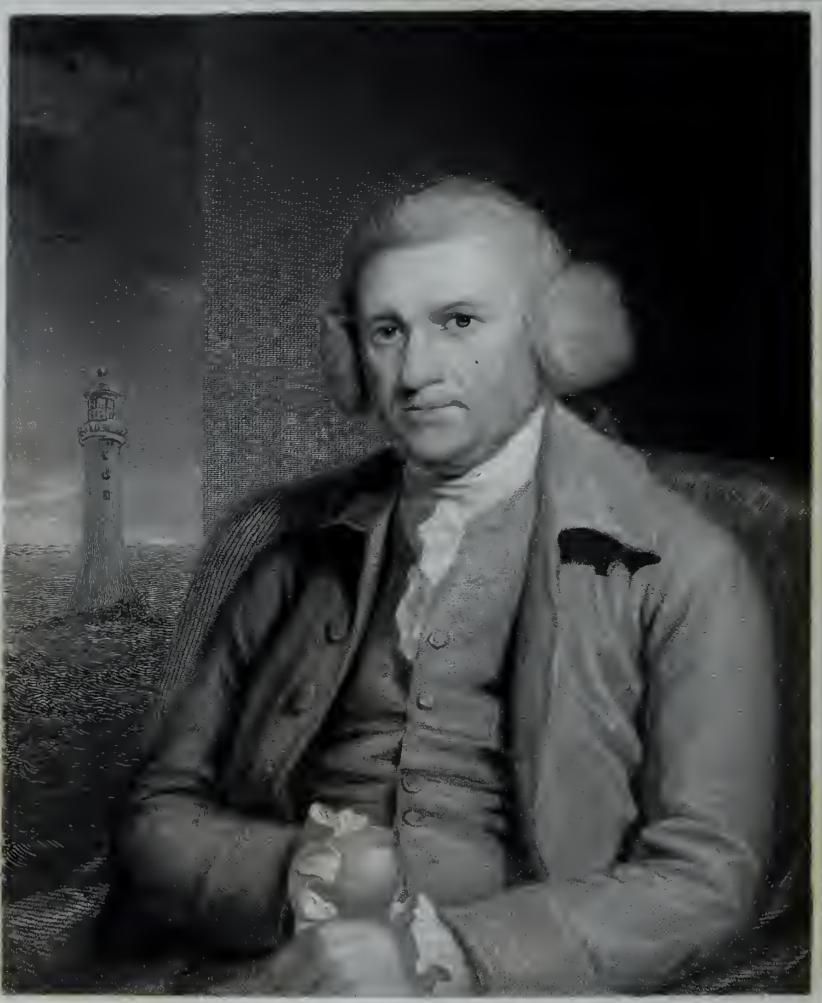
Of the mode in which the remaining period of his life was spent after his removal from public business, little is known. There is, however, no doubt that the concluding years of his existence were darkened by much sickness and some degree of mental alienation. On the accession of George I. he formally took his seat at the Council-Board ; but a paralytic affection, which had destroyed his bodily health, had so impaired the faculties of his mind as to incapacitate him entirely for business. At intervals, however, when the pressure of disease was suspended, he appears to have recurred with strong interest to passing events in which the welfare of his country was involved. When the Septennial Bill was in progress, Lord Townshend called upon him : Lord Somers embraced him, congratulated him on the progress of the bill, and declared that “he thought it would be the greatest support possible to the liberty of the country.” On a subsequent occasion, when informed by the same nobleman of the determination of George I. to adopt the advice of his ministry, by executing the full rigour of the law against Lord

Derwentwater, and the other unfortunate persons concerned in the Rebellion of 1715, he is said to have asked with great emotion, and shedding many tears, “whether they meant to revive the proscriptions of Marius and Sylla?”

He soon afterwards sunk into a state of total imbecility, from which, on the 26th of April, 1716, he was happily released by death.







Engraving by W. H. Worrell

## JOHN SIMCOE

An original portrait of  
in the possession of the Royal Society

Printed by J. D. & C. Smith, 1800.



JOHN SMEATON will long be remembered as one of the most laborious and most successful civil engineers whom Britain has produced : a class to which our country is deeply indebted for its commercial greatness. He was born at Austhorpe, near Leeds, May 28, 1724. His father was an attorney, and intended to bring his son up to his own profession : but the latter finding, to use his own words, “that the law did not suit the bent of his genius,” obtained his parent’s consent that he should seek a more congenial employment.

From a very early age he had shown great fondness for mechanical occupations. “His playthings,” it is said by one long acquainted with him, “were not the playthings of children, but the tools men work with ; and he appeared to have greater entertainment in seeing the men in the neighbourhood work, and asking them questions, than in any thing else.” At the age of eighteen he was in the habit of forging iron and steel, and melting metal for his own use : and he possessed tools of every sort for working in wood, ivory, and metal. Some of these were of his own construction ; and among them an engine for rose-turning, and a lathe by which he had cut a perpetual screw, a thing little known at that time.

In the year 1750 he established himself in the Great Turnstile in Holborn, as a philosophical instrument-maker. While he followed this trade, he became known to the scientific circles by several ingenious inventions ; among which were a new kind of magnetic compass, and a machine for measuring a ship’s way at sea. He was elected fellow of the Royal Society in 1753 ; and contributed several papers

to the Philosophical Transactions, one of which, entitled ‘An Experimental Enquiry concerning the natural powers of water and wind to turn mills and other machines, depending on a circular motion,’ obtained the gold medal in 1759.

In 1755 the Eddystone light-house was destroyed by fire. At this time Smeaton had never practised as an architect or engineer. But the proprietors, to use his own words, “considered that to reinstate it would require, not so much a person who had been merely bred, or who had rendered himself eminent in this or that given profession, but rather one who from natural genius had a turn for contrivance in the mechanical branches of science.” Thinking thus, they applied to the President of the Royal Society to recommend a fitting person, and he without hesitation named Smeaton. We shall speak hereafter of the difficulties which attended this work, and the method of its execution; the nature of it is familiar to every reader. Two light-houses had been destroyed within half a century: his own, after the lapse of seventy-three years, stands unimpaired;—a proud monument of the power of man to overcome the elements. This building was finished in 1759, and established his reputation as a civil engineer: but it was some time before he devoted his attention solely to practising in that capacity. In 1764 he was appointed one of the Receivers of the Greenwich Hospital Estates, and in the discharge of his duty, he suggested various improvements which were of material service to the property. He resigned that office about 1777, in consequence of the increase of his other business. In 1766 he was employed to furnish designs for new light-houses at the Spurn Head, at the mouth of the Humber, and after considerable delay, was appointed Surveyor of the Works in 1771. These were completed in April, 1777. Among other undertakings he repaired and improved the navigation of the river Calder; he built the bridge over the Tay, at Perth, and some others on the Highland road, north of Inverness; he laid out the line, and superintended the execution of a considerable portion of the great canal connecting the Forth and Clyde. His high reputation was shown shortly after the two centre arches of old London bridge had been thrown into one. The foundations of the piers were discovered to be damaged, and the danger of the bridge was esteemed so imminent that few persons would venture to pass over it. The opinions of the architects on the spot were deemed unsatisfactory; and Smeaton, being at the time in Yorkshire, was summoned by express, to say what should be done. He found that the increased volume of water passing through the centre arch had undermined the piers; and removed the danger by the simple

expedient, the success of which he had proved on the river Calder, of throwing in a large quantity of rough stone about them. The interstices of the heap soon are filled up by sand and mud, and the whole is consolidated almost into one mass, and forms a secure and lasting barrier. The best known of Smeaton's works, after the Eddystone light-house, is the magnificent pier and harbour of Ramsgate. This undertaking was commenced in 1749, and prosecuted for some time with very imperfect success. In 1774 Smeaton was called in ; and he continued to superintend the progress of the works till their completion in 1791. The harbour is now enclosed by two piers, the eastern nearly 2000, the western 1500 feet in length, and affords a safe and a much needed refuge to ships lying in the Downs, even of five and six hundred tons, which before, when driven from their anchors by stress of weather, were almost certain to be cast ashore and wrecked.

It would be vain to enumerate all the projects in which he was consulted, or the schemes which he executed. The variety and extent of his employments may be best estimated from his Reports, of which a complete collection has been published by the Society of Civil Engineers, in consequence of the liberality of Sir Joseph Banks, who had purchased, and presented them to the Society for this purpose. They fill three quarto volumes, and constitute a most interesting and valuable series of treatises on every branch of engineering ; as draining, bridge-building, making and improving canals and navigable rivers, planning docks and harbours, the improvement of mill-work, and the application of mechanical improvements to different manufactures. His papers in the Philosophical Transactions are published separately, and fill another quarto volume. They contain descriptions of those early inventions which we have mentioned, and of an improved air-pump, and a new hygrometer and pyrometer ; together with his treatise on Mill-work, and some papers which show that he was fond of the science of astronomy, and practically skilled in it.

His health began to decline about 1785, and he endeavoured to withdraw from business, and to devote his attention to publishing an account of his own inventions and works ; for as he often said, " he thought he could not render so much service to his country as by doing that." He succeeded in bringing out his elaborate account of the Eddystone Light-house, published in 1791. But he found it impossible to withdraw entirely from business : and it appears that over-exertion and anxiety did actually bring on an attack of paralysis, to which his family were constitutionally liable. He was taken ill at his residence at Austrhorpe, in September, 1792, and died October 28, in the sixty-ninth

year of his age. He had long looked to this disease as the probable termination of his life, and felt some anxiety concerning the likelihood of out-living his faculties, and in his own words, of “lingering over the dregs after the spirit had evaporated.” This calamity was spared him: in the interval between his first attack and his death, his mind was unclouded, and he continued to take his usual interest in the occupations of his domestic circle. Sometimes only he would complain, with a smile, of his slowness of apprehension, and say, “It cannot be otherwise: the shadow must lengthen as the sun goes down.”

His character was marked by undeviating uprightness, industry, and moderation in pursuit of riches. His gains might have been far larger; but he relinquished more than one appointment which brought in a considerable income, to devote his attention to other objects which he had more at heart; and he declined the magnificent offers of Catharine II. of Russia, who would have bought his services at any price. His industry was unwearied, and the distribution of his hours and employments strictly laid down by rule. In his family and by his friends he was singularly beloved, though his demeanour sometimes appeared harsh to strangers. A brief, but very interesting and affectionate account of him, written by his daughter, is prefixed to his Reports, from which many of the anecdotes here related have been derived.

Of the many great undertakings in which Smeaton was engaged, the most original, and the most celebrated, is the Eddystone light-house. The reef of rocks known by the name of the Eddystone lies about nine miles and a half from the Ram Head, at the entrance of Plymouth Sound, exposed to the full swell of the Atlantic, which, with a very moderate gale, breaks upon it with the utmost fury. The situation, directly between the Lizard and Start points, makes it of the utmost importance to have a light-house on it; and in 1698 Mr. Winstanley succeeded in completing one. This stood till 1703, but was entirely carried away in the memorable storm of November 26, in that year. It chanced, by a singular coincidence, that shortly before, on a doubt of the stability of the building being uttered, the architect expressed himself so entirely satisfied on that point, that “he should only wish to be there in the greatest storm that ever blew under the face of the heavens.” He was gratified in his wish; and perished with every person in the building. This building was chiefly, if not wholly of timber. In 1706 Mr. Rudyerd commenced a new light-house, partly of stone and partly of wood, which stood till 1755, when it was burnt down to the very rock. Warned by this accident, Smeaton

resolved that his should be entirely of stone. He spent much time in considering the best methods of grafting his work securely on the solid rock, and giving it the form best suited to secure stability ; and one of the most interesting parts of his interesting account, is that in which he narrates how he was led to choose the shape which he adopted, by considering the means employed by nature to produce stability in her works. The building is modelled on the trunk of an oak, which spreads out in a sweeping curve near the roots, so as to give breadth and strength to its base, diminishes as it rises, and again swells out as it approaches to the bushy head, to give room for the strong insertion of the principal boughs. The latter is represented by a curved cornice, the effect of which is to throw off the heavy seas, which being suddenly checked fly up, it is said, from fifty to a hundred feet above the very top of the building, and thus to prevent their striking the lantern, even when they seem entirely to enclose it. The efficacy of this construction is such, that after a storm and spring tide of unequalled violence in 1762, in which the greatest fears were entertained at Plymouth for the safety of the light-house, the only article requisite to repair it was a pot of putty, to replace some that had been washed from the lantern.

To prepare a fit base for the reception of the column, the shelving rock was cut into six steps, which were filled up with masonry, firmly dovetailed, and pinned with oaken trenails to the living stone, so that the upper course presented a level circular surface. This part of the work was attended with the greatest difficulty ; the rock being accessible only at low water, and in calm weather. The building is faced with the Cornish granite, called in the country, moorstone ; a material selected on account of its durability and hardness, which bids defiance to the depredations of marine animals, which have been known to do serious injury by perforating Portland stone when placed under water. The interior is built of Portland stone, which is more easily obtained in large blocks, and is less expensive in the working. It is an instructive lesson, not only to the young engineer, but to all persons, to see the diligence which Smeaton used to ascertain what kind of stone was best fitted for his purposes, and from what materials the firmest and most lasting cement could be obtained. He well knew that in novel and great undertakings no precaution can be deemed superfluous which may contribute to success ; and that it is wrong to trust implicitly to common methods, even where experience has shown them to be sufficient in common cases. For the height of twelve feet from the rock the building is solid. Every course of masonry is composed of stones firmly jointed and dovetailed into each other, and secured to the course below by *joggles*, or solid plugs of stone, which being let into both, effectually resist the lateral pressure

of the waves, which tends to push off the upper from the under course. The interior, which is accessible by a moveable ladder, consists of four rooms, one over the other, surmounted by a glass lantern, in which the lights are placed. The height from the lowest point of the foundation to the floor of the lantern is seventy feet; the height of the lantern is twenty-one feet more. The building was commenced August 3, 1756, and finished October 8, 1759; and having braved uninjured the storms of seventy-three winters, is likely long to remain a monument almost as elegant, and far more useful, than the most splendid column ever raised to commemorate imperial victories. Its erection forms an era in the history of light-houses, a subject of great importance to a maritime nation. It came perfect from the mind of the artist; and has left nothing to be added or improved. After such an example no accessible rock can be considered impracticable: and in the more recent erection of a light-house on the dangerous Bell-rock, lying off the coast of Forfarshire, between the Frith of Tay and the Frith of Forth, which is built exactly in the same manner, and almost on the same model, we see the best proof of the value of an impulse, such as was given to this subject by Smeaton.



Light-houses of (1) Winstanley, (2) Smeaton, and (3) Rudyerd.





Engraved by Robert H.

## BUTTÉON

*From an original picture by Daudin in the  
collection of the Institute of France*



BUFFON is reported to have said—and the vanity which was his predominant foible may have given some colour to the assertion—“I know but five great geniuses, Newton, Bacon, Leibnitz, Montesquieu, and myself.” Probably no author ever received from his contemporaries so many excitements to such an exhibition of presumption and self-consequence. Lewis XV. conferred upon him a title of nobility; the Empress of Russia was his correspondent; Prince Henry of Prussia addressed him in the language of the most exaggerated compliment; and his statue was set up during his life-time in the cabinet of Lewis XVI., with such an inscription as is rarely bestowed even upon the most illustrious of past ages\*. After the lapse of half a century we may examine the personal character, and the literary merits, of this celebrated man with a more sober judgment.

The history of Buffon is singularly barren of incident. At an early age he devoted himself to those studies of natural history which have rendered his name so famous; and at eighty years old he was still labouring at the completion of the great plan to which he had dedicated his life.

George Lewis le Clerc Buffon was born at Montbar, in Burgundy, on the 7th September, 1707. His father, Benjamin le Clerc, was a man of fortune, who could afford to bestow the most careful education upon his children, and leave them unfettered in the choice of an occupation. The young Buffon had formed an acquaintance at Dijon with an Englishman of his own age, the Duke of Kingston. The tutor of this nobleman was, fortunately, an accomplished student of the physical sciences; and he gave a powerful impulse to the talents of Buffon, by leading them forward in their natural direction. Without the assistance of this judicious friend, the inclination of his mind towards honourable and useful exertion might have been suppressed by the temptations which too easily beset those who have an ample command

\* Majestati naturæ par ingenium.

of the goods of fortune. It was not so with Buffon. Although he succeeded, at the age of twenty-one, to the estate of his mother, which produced him an annual income of 12,000*l.*, he devoted himself with unremitting assiduity to the acquisition of knowledge. Having travelled in Italy, and resided some little time in England, he returned to his own country, to dedicate himself to the constant labours of a man of letters. His first productions were translations of two English works of very different character—‘Hales’ Vegetable Statics,’ and ‘Newton’s Fluxions;’ and, following up the pursuits for which he exhibited his love in these translations, he carried on a series of experiments on the strength of timber, and constructed a burning mirror, in imitation of that of Archimedes.

The devotion to science which Buffon had thus manifested marked him out for an appointment which determined the course of his future life. His friend, Du Fay, who was the Intendant of the ‘*Jardin du Roi*’ (now called the ‘*Jardin des Plantes*’), on his death-bed recommended Buffon as the person best calculated to give a right direction to this establishment for the cultivation of natural history. Buffon seized upon the opportunities which this appointment afforded him of prosecuting his favourite studies, with that energetic perseverance for which he was remarkable. He saw that natural history had to be written in a manner that might render it the most attractive species of knowledge; and that philosophical views, and eloquent descriptions, might supersede the dry nomenclatures, and the loose, contradictory, and too-often fabulous narratives which resulted from the crude labours of ill-informed compilers. To carry forward his favourite object, it was necessary that the museum, over which he had now the control, should be put in order and rendered more complete. He obtained from the government considerable funds for the erection of proper buildings; and the galleries of the ‘*Jardin des Plantes*,’ which now hold the fine collection of mammals and birds, were raised under his superintendence. Possessing, therefore, the most complete means which Europe afforded, he applied himself to the great task of describing the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms of nature. A large portion of this immense undertaking was left unperformed, although, to use his own words, he laboured fifty years at his desk; and much of what he accomplished was greatly diminished in value by his determination to see natural objects only through the clouded medium of his own theories. But, nevertheless, he has produced a work which, with all its faults, is an extraordinary monument of genius and industry, and which will long entitle him to the gratitude of mankind. “We read Buffon,” says Condorcet, “to be interested as well

as instructed. He will continue to excite a useful enthusiasm for the natural sciences ; and the world will long be indebted to him for the pleasures with which a young mind for the first time looks into nature and the consolations with which a soul weary of the storms of life reposes upon the sight of the immensity of beings peaceably submitted to necessary and eternal laws."

Buffon was in some particulars unqualified for the laborious duty he had undertaken. He delighted to indulge in broad and general views, and to permit his imagination to luxuriate in striking descriptions. But he had neither the patience, nor the love of accuracy, which would have carried him into those minute details which give to natural history its highest value. He, however, had the merit and the good fortune, in the early stages of his undertaking, to associate himself with a fellow-labourer who possessed those qualities in which he was deficient. The first fifteen volumes of '*L'Histoire Naturelle*,' which treat of the theory of the earth, the nature of animals, and the history of man and viviparous quadrupeds, were published between 1749 and 1767, as the joint work of Buffon and Daubenton. The general theories, the descriptions of the phenomena of nature, and the pictures of the habits of animals, were by Buffon. Daubenton confined himself to the precise delineation of their physical character, both in their external forms and their anatomy. But Daubenton refused to continue his assistance in the 'History of Birds ;' for Buffon, unwilling that the fame which he had acquired should be partaken by one whom he considered only as a humble and subordinate labourer, allowed an edition of the History of Quadrupeds to be published, of which the descriptive and anatomical parts had been greatly abridged. In the History of Birds, therefore, Buffon had to seek for other associates ; and the form of the work was greatly changed from that of the previous volumes. The particular descriptions are here very meagre, and anatomical details are almost entirely excluded. In some of the volumes, Buffon was assisted by Guéneau de Montbeillard, who, instead of endeavouring to attain the accuracy of Daubenton, affected to imitate the style of his employer. To the three last volumes of the Birds the Abbé Bexon lent his aid. The nine volumes of Birds appeared between 1770 and 1783. Buffon published alone his 'History of Minerals,' which appeared in five volumes, between 1783 and 1788. Seven volumes of Supplements complete the Natural History. The first appeared in 1773 ; the last was not published till the year after its author's death, in 1789. The fifth volume of these Supplements is a distinct work, the Epochs of Nature\*.

\* The best edition of the works of Buffon is the first, of 36 vols. 4to.

The study of natural history, and the composition of his great work, occupied the mind of Buffon from his first appointment as Intendant of the '*Jardin du Roi*,' to within a few days of his death. In the prosecution of the plan he had laid down, he never permitted the slightest interruption. Pleasure and indolence had their attractions;—but they never held him for many hours from his favourite pursuits. Buffon spent the greater part of his time at Montbar, where, during some years, his friend Daubenton also resided. It was here that Buffon composed nearly the whole of his works. Many interesting details have been preserved of his habits of life, and his mode of composition. He was, like all men who have accomplished great literary undertakings, a severe economist of his time. The employment of every day was fixed with the greatest exactness. He used almost invariably to rise at five o'clock, compelling his man-servant to drag him out of bed whenever he was unwilling to get up. "I owe to poor Joseph," he used to say, "ten or twelve volumes of my works." At the end of his garden was a pavilion which served him as a study. Here he was seated for many hours of every day, in an old leathern chair, before a table of black birch, with his papers arranged in a large walnut-tree escritoire. Before he began to write he was accustomed to meditate for a long time upon his subject. Composition was to him a real delight; and he used to declare that he had spent twelve or fourteen hours successively at his desk, continuing to the last in a state of pleasure. His endeavours to obtain the utmost correctness of expression furnished a remarkable proof of the persevering quality of his mind. He composed, and copied, and read his works to friends, and re-copied, till he was entirely satisfied. It is said that he made eleven transcripts of the Epochs of Nature. In his domestic habits there was little to admire in the character of Buffon. His conversation was trifling and licentious, and the grossness which too often discloses itself in his writings was ill-concealed in his own conduct. He paid the most minute attention to dress, and delighted in walking to church to exhibit his finery to his wondering neighbours. Although he was entirely devoid of religious principle, and constantly endeavoured in his writings to throw discredit upon the belief of a great First Cause, he regularly attended high mass, received the communion, and distributed alms to pious beggars. In his whole character there appears a total absence of that simplicity which is the distinguishing attribute of men of the very highest genius.

The literary glory of Buffon, although surpassed, or even equalled, during his life, by none of his contemporaries, with the exception per-

haps of Voltaire and Rousseau, has not increased, and is perhaps materially diminished, after having been tried by the opinions of half a century. In literature, as well as in politics, as we have learnt to attach a greater value to accurate facts, have we become less captivated by the force of eloquence alone. Buffon gave an extraordinary impulse to the love of natural history, by surrounding its details with splendid images, and escaping from its rigid investigations by bold and dazzling theories. He rejected classification ; and took no pains to distinguish by precise names the objects which he described, because such accuracy would have impeded the progress of his magnificent generalizations. Without classification, and an accurate nomenclature, natural history is a mere chaos. Buffon saw the productions of nature only in masses. He made no endeavour to delineate with perfect accuracy any individual of that immense body, nor to trace the relations of an individual to all the various forms of being by which it is surrounded. Although he was a profound admirer of Newton, and classed Bacon amongst the most illustrious of men, he constantly deviated from the principle of that philosophy upon which all modern discovery has been founded. He carried onward his hypotheses with little calculation and less experiment. And yet, although they are often misapplied, he has collected an astonishing number of facts ; and even many of his boldest generalities have been based upon a sufficient foundation of truth, to furnish important assistance to the investigations of more accurate inquirers. The persevering obliquity with which he turns away from the evidence of Design in the creation, to rest upon some vague notions of a self-creative power, both in animate and inanimate existence, is one of the most unpleasant features of his writings. How much higher services might Buffon have rendered to natural history had he been imbued not only with a spirit of accurate and comprehensive classification, but with a perception of the constant agency of a Creator, of both of which merits he had so admirable an example in our own Ray.

The style of Buffon, viewed as an elaborate work of art, and without regard to the great object of style, that of conveying thoughts in the clearest and simplest manner, is captivating from its sustained harmony and occasional grandeur. But it is a style of a past age. Even in his own day, it was a theme for ridicule with those who knew the real force of conciseness and simplicity. Voltaire described it as ‘*empoulé*;’ and when some one talked to him of ‘*L’Histoire Naturelle*,’ he drily replied, ‘*Pas si naturelle*.’ But Buffon was not carried away by the mere love of fine writing. He knew his own power ; and, looking at the state of science in his day, he seized upon the instrument

which was best calculated to elevate him amongst his contemporaries. The very exaggerations of his style were perhaps necessary to render natural history at once attractive to all descriptions of people. Up to his time it had been a dry and repulsive study. He first clothed it with the picturesque and poetical ; threw a moral sentiment around its commonest details ; exhibited animals in connection with man, in his mightiest and most useful works ; and described the great phenomena of nature with a pomp of language which had never before been called to the service of philosophical investigation. The publication of his works carried the study of natural history out of the closets of the few, to become a source of delight and instruction to all men.

Buffon died at Paris on the 16th April, 1788, aged 81. He was married, in 1762, to Mademoiselle de St. Bélin ; and he left an only son, who succeeded to his title. This unfortunate young man perished on the scaffold, in 1795, almost one of the last victims of the fury of the revolution. When he ascended to the guillotine he exclaimed, with great composure, " My name is Buffon."

A succinct and clear memoir of Buffon, by Cuvier, in the *Biographie Universelle*, may be advantageously consulted. Nearly all the details of his private life are derived from a curious work by Renault de Séchelles, entitled *Voyage à Montbar*, which, like many other domestic histories of eminent men, has the disgrace of being founded upon a violation of the laws of hospitality.





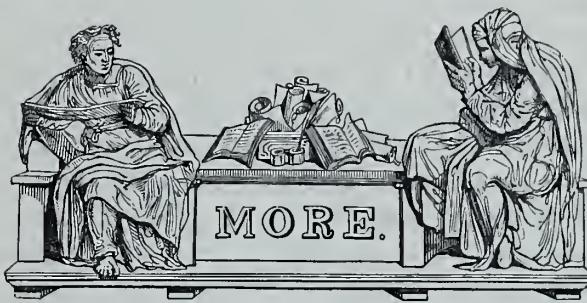


Engraved by K. Woodman

## SIR THOMAS MORE

From an original portrait  
in the possession of C. Clarke Esq.

Under the Superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge



THIS great man was born in London, in the year 1480. His father was Sir John More, one of the Judges of the King's Bench, a gentleman of established reputation. He was early placed in the family of Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Lord Chancellor of England. The sons of the gentry were at this time sent into the families of the first nobility and leading statesmen, on an equivocal footing; partly for the finishing of their education, and partly in a menial capacity. The Cardinal said more than once to the nobility who were dining with him, "This boy waiting at table, whosoever lives to see it, will one day prove a marvellous man." His eminent patron was highly delighted with that vivacity and wit which appeared in his childhood, and did not desert him on the scaffold. Plays were performed in the archiepiscopal household at Christmas. On these occasions young More would play the improvisatore, and introduce an extempore part of his own, more amusing to the spectators than all the rest of the performance. In due time Morton sent him to Oxford, where he heard the lectures of Linacer and Grocyn on the Greek and Latin languages. The epigrams and translations printed in his works evince his skill in both. After a regular course of rhetoric, logic, and philosophy, at Oxford, he removed to London, where he became a law student, first in New Inn, and afterwards in Lincoln's Inn. He gained considerable reputation by reading public lectures on Saint Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, at Saint Lawrence's church in the Old Jewry. The most learned men in the city of London attended him;

among the rest Grocyn, his lecturer in Greek at Oxford, and a writer against the doctrines of Wickliff. The object of More's prolixities was not so much to discuss points in theology, as to explain the precepts of moral philosophy, and clear up difficulties in history. For more than three years after this he was Law-reader at Furnival's Inn. He next removed to the Charter-House, where he lived in devotion and prayer; and it is stated that from the age of twenty he wore a hair-shirt next his skin. He remained there about four years, without taking the vows, although he performed all the spiritual exercises of the society, and had a strong inclination to enter the priesthood. But his spiritual adviser, Dr. Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, recommended him to adopt a different course. On a visit to a gentleman of Essex, by name Colt, he was introduced to his three daughters, and became attached to the second, who was the handsomest of the family. But he bethought him that it would be both a grief and a scandal to the eldest to see her younger sister married before her. He therefore reconsidered his passion, and from motives of pity prevailed with himself to be in love with the elder, or at all events to marry her. Erasmus says that she was young and uneducated, for which her husband liked her the better, as being more capable of conforming to his own model of a wife. He had her instructed in literature, and especially in music.

He continued his study of the law at Lincoln's Inn, but resided in Bucklersbury after his marriage. His first wife lived about seven years. By her he had three daughters and one son; and we are informed by his son-in-law, Roper, that he brought them up with the most sedulous attention to their intellectual and moral improvement. It was a quaint exhortation of his, that they should take virtue and learning for their meat, and pleasure for their sauce.

In the latter part of King Henry the Seventh's time, and at a very early age, More distinguished himself in parliament. The King had demanded a subsidy for the marriage of his eldest daughter, who was to be the Scottish Queen. The demand was not complied with. On being told that his purpose had been frustrated by the opposition of a beardless boy, Henry was greatly incensed, and determined on revenge. He knew that the actual offender, not possessing anything, could not lose anything; he therefore devised a groundless charge against the father, and confined him to the Tower till he had extorted a fine of £100 for his alleged offence. Fox, Bishop of Winchester, a privy councillor, insidiously undertook to reinstate young More in the

King's favour: but the Bishop's Chaplain warned him not to listen to any such proposals; and gave a pithy reason for the advice, highly illustrative of Fox's real character. "To serve the King's purposes, my lord and master will not hesitate to consent to his own father's death." To avoid evil consequences, More determined to go abroad. With this view, he made himself master of the French language, and cultivated the liberal sciences, as astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, and music; he also made himself thoroughly acquainted with history: but in the mean time the King's death rendered it safe to remain in England, and he abandoned all thoughts of foreign travel.

Notwithstanding his practice at the bar, and his lectures, which were quoted by Lord Coke as undisputed authority, he found leisure for the pursuits of philosophy and polite literature. In 1516 he wrote his *Utopia*, the only one of his works which has commanded much of public attention in after times. In general they were chiefly of a polemic kind, in defence of a cause which even his abilities could not make good. But in this extraordinary work he allowed his powerful mind fair play, and considered both mankind and religion with the freedom of a true philosopher. He represents *Utopia* as one of those countries lately discovered in America, and the account of it is feigned to be given by a Portuguese, who sailed in company with the first discoverer of that part of the world. Under the character of this Portuguese he delivers his own opinions. His *History of Richard III.* was never finished, but it is inserted in Kennet's *Complete History of England*. Among his other eminent acquaintance, he was particularly attached to Erasmus. They had long corresponded before they were personally known to each other. Erasmus came to England for the purpose of seeing his friend; and it was contrived that they should meet at the Lord Mayor's table before they were introduced to each other. At dinner they engaged in argument. Erasmus felt the keenness of his antagonist's wit; and when hard pressed, exclaimed, "You are More, or nobody;" the reply was, "You are Erasmus, or the Devil."

Before More entered definitively into the service of Henry VIII. his learning, wisdom, and experience were held in such high estimation, that he was twice sent on important commercial embassies. His discretion in those employments made the King desirous of securing him for the service of the court; and he commissioned Wolsey, then Lord Chancellor, to engage him. But so little inclined was he to involve himself in political intrigues, that the King's wish was not at

the time accomplished. Soon after, More was retained as counsel for the Pope, for the purpose of reclaiming the forfeiture of a ship. His argument was so learned, and his conduct in the cause so judicious and upright, that the ship was restored. The King upon this insisted on having him in his service; and, as the first step to preferment, made him Master of the Requests, a Knight and Privy Councillor.

In 1520 he was made Treasurer of the Exchequer: he then bought a house by the river-side at Chelsea, where he had settled with his family. He had at that time buried his first wife and was married to a second. He continued in the King's service full twenty years, during which time his royal master conferred with him on various subjects, including astronomy, geometry, and divinity; and frequently consulted him on his private concerns. More's pleasant temper and witty conversation made him such a favourite at the palace, as almost to estrange him from his own family; and under these circumstances his peculiar humour manifested itself; for he so restrained the natural bias of his freedom and mirth as to render himself a less amusing companion, and at length to be seldom sent for but on occasions of business.

A more important circumstance gave More much consequence with the King. The latter was preparing his answer to Luther, and Sir Thomas assisted him in the controversy. While this was going on, the King one day came to dine with him; and after dinner walked with him in the garden with his arm round his neck. After Henry's departure, Mr. Roper, Sir Thomas's son-in-law, remarked on the King's familiarity, as exceeding even that used towards Cardinal Wolsey, with whom he had only once been seen to walk arm in arm. The answer of Sir Thomas was shrewd and almost prophetic. "I find his Grace my very good lord indeed, and I believe he doth as singularly favour me as any subject within this realm. However, Son Roper, I may tell thee, I have no cause to be proud thereof; for if my head would win him a castle in France it should not fail to go."

In 1523 he was chosen Speaker of the House of Commons, and displayed great intrepidity in the discharge of that office. Wolsey was afraid lest this parliament should refuse a great subsidy about to be demanded, and announced his intention of being present at the debate. He had previously expressed his indignation at the publicity given to the proceedings of the house, which he had compared to the gossip of an ale-house. Sir Thomas More therefore persuaded the members to

admit not only the Cardinal, but all his pomp ; his maces, poll-axes, crosses, hat, and great seal. The reason he assigned was, that should the like fault be imputed to them hereafter, they might be able to shift the blame on the shoulders of his Grace's attendants. The proposal of the subsidy was met with the negative of profound silence ; and the Speaker declared that “ except every member could put into his one head all their several wits, he alone in so weighty a matter was unmeet to make his Grace answer.” After the parliament had broken up, Wolsey expressed his displeasure against the Speaker in his own gallery at Whitehall ; but More, with his usual quiet humour, parried the attack by a ready compliment to the taste and splendour of the room in which they were conversing.

On the death of Sir Richard Wingfield, the King promoted Sir Thomas to the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster. At this time the see of Rome became vacant, and Wolsey aspired to the Papacy ; but Charles V. disappointed him, and procured the election of Cardinal Adrian. In revenge, Wolsey contrived to persuade Henry that Catharine was not his lawful wife, and endeavoured to turn his affections towards one of the French King's sisters. The case was referred to More, who was assisted by the most learned of the Privy Council ; and he managed, difficult as it must have been to do so, to extricate both himself and his colleagues from the dilemma. His conduct as ambassador at Cambray, where a treaty of peace was negotiated between the Emperor, France, and England, so confirmed the favour of his master towards him, that on the fall of the Cardinal he was made Lord Chancellor. The great seal was delivered to him on the 25th of October, 1530. This favour was the more extraordinary, as he was the first layman on whom it was bestowed : but it may reasonably be suspected that the private motive was to engage him in the approval of the meditated divorce. This he probably suspected, and entered on the office with a full knowledge of the danger to which it exposed him. He performed the duties of his function for nearly three years with exemplary diligence, great ability, and uncorrupted integrity. His resignation took place on the 16th May, 1533. His motive was supposed to be a regard to his own safety, as he was sensible that a confirmation of the divorce would be officially required from him, and he was too conscientious to comply with the mandate of power, against his own moral and legal convictions.

While Chancellor some of his injunctions were disapproved by the common law judges. He therefore invited them to dine with him in

the council chamber, and proved to them by professional arguments that their complaints were unfounded. He then proposed that they should themselves mitigate the rigour of the law by their own conscientious discretion ; in which case, he would grant no more injunctions. This they refused ; and the consequence was, that he continued that practice in equity which has come down to the present day.

It was through the intervention of his friend the Duke of Norfolk that he procured his discharge from the laborious, and under the circumstances of the time, the dangerous eminence of the chancellorship, which he quitted in honourable poverty. After the payment of his debts he had not the value of one hundred pounds in gold and silver, nor more than twenty marks a year in land. On this occasion his love of a jest did not desert him. While Chancellor, as soon as the church service was over, one of his train used to go to his lady's pew, and say, “ Madam, my Lord is gone ! ” On the first holiday after his train had been dismissed, he performed that ceremony himself, and by saying at the end of the service, “ Madam, my Lord is gone,” gave his wife the first intimation that he had surrendered the great seal.

He had resolved never again to engage in public business ; but the divorce, and still more the subsequent marriage with Anne Boleyn, which nothing could induce him to favour, with the King's alienation from the see of Rome, raised a storm over his head from which his voluntary seclusion at Chelsea, in study and devotion, could not shelter him. When tempting offers proved ineffectual to win him over to sanction Anne Boleyn's coronation by his high legal authority, threats and terrors were resorted to : his firmness was not to be shaken, but his ruin was determined, and ultimately accomplished. In the next parliament he, and his friend Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, were attainted of treason and misprision of treason for listening to the ravings of Elizabeth Barton, considered by the vulgar as the Holy Maid of Kent, and countenancing her treasonable practices. His innocence was so clearly established, that his name was erased from the bill ; and it was supposed to have been introduced into it only for the purpose of shaking his resolution touching the divorce and marriage. But though he had escaped this snare his firmness occasioned him to be devoted as a victim. Anne Boleyn took pains to exasperate the King against him, and when the Act of Supremacy was passed in 1534, the oath required by it was tendered to him. The refusal to take it, which his principles compelled him to give, was expressed in discreet and qualified terms ; he was nevertheless taken into the custody of the

Abbot of Westminster, and upon a second refusal four days after was committed prisoner to the Tower of Loudon.

Our limits will not allow us to detail many particulars of his life while in confinement, marked as it was by firmness, resignation, and cheerfulness, resulting from a conscience, however much mistaken, yet void of intentional offence. His reputation and credit were very great in the kingdom, and much was supposed to depend on his conduct at this critical juncture. Archbishop Cranmer, therefore, urged every argument that could be devised to persuade him to compliance, and promises were profusely made to him from the King; but neither argument nor promises could prevail. We will give the last of these attempts to shake his determination, in the words of his son-in-law, Mr. Roper:—

“ Mr. Rich, pretending friendly talk with him, among other things of a set course, said this unto him: ‘ Forasmuch as is well known, Master More, that you are a man both wise and well learned, as well in the laws of the realm as otherwise, I pray you, therefore, sir, let me be so bold as of good-will to put unto you this case. Admit there were, sir, an act of parliament that the realm should take me for King; would not you, Mr. More, take me for King?’ ‘ Yes, sir,’ quoth Sir Thomas More, ‘ that would I.’ ‘ I put the case further,’ quoth Mr. Rich, ‘ that there were an act of parliament that all the realm should take me for Pope; would not you then, Master More, take me for Pope?’ ‘ For answer, sir,’ quoth Sir Thomas More, ‘ to your first case the parliament may well, Master Rich, meddle with the state of temporal princes; but to make answer to your other case, I will put you this case. Suppose the parliament would make a law that God should not be God; would you then, Master Rich, say that God were not God?’ ‘ No, sir,’ quoth he, ‘ that would I not; sith no parliament may make any such law.’ ‘ No more,’ quoth Sir Thomas More, ‘ could the parliament make the King supreme head of the Church.’ Upon whose only report was Sir Thomas indicted of high treason on the statute to deny the King to be supreme head of the Church, into which indictment were put these heinous words, *maliciously, traitorously, and diabolically.*”

Sir Thomas More in his defence alleged many arguments to the discredit of Rich’s evidence, and in proof of the clearness of his own conscience; but all this was of no avail, and the jury found him guilty. When asked in the usual manner why judgment should not be passed against him, he argued against the indictment as grounded on an Act of Parliament repugnant to the laws of God and the Church, the government of which belonged to the see of Rome, and could not lawfully be



PIERRE SIMON LAPLACE was born at Beaumont en Auge, a small town of Normandy, not far from Honfleur, in March, 1749. His father was a small farmer of sufficient substance to give him the benefit of a learned education, for we are told\* that the future philosopher gained his first distinctions in theology. It does not appear by what means his attention was turned to mathematical science, but he must have commenced that study when very young, as, on visiting Paris at the age of about eighteen, he attracted the notice of D'Alembert by his knowledge of the subject. He had previously taught mathematics in his native place ; and, on visiting the metropolis, was furnished with letters of recommendation to several of the most distinguished men of the day. Finding, however, that D'Alembert took no notice of him on this account, he wrote that geometer a letter on the first principles of mechanics, which produced an immediate effect. D'Alembert sent for him the same day, and said, " You see, sir, how little I care for introductions, but you have no need of any. You have a better way of making yourself known, and you have a right to my assistance." Through the recommendation of D'Alembert, Laplace was in a few days named Professor of Mathematics in the Military School of Paris. From this moment he applied himself to the one great object of his life. It was not till the year 1799 that he was called to assume a public character. Bonaparte, then First Consul,

\* A scanty account in the *Biographie des Contemporains*, and the Elogie read to the Institute by M. Fourier, form our only materials for the personal life of LAPLACE.



Engraved by J. Greenwhite

## LA PLACE

*From an original Picture by Hogen  
in the possession of the Marchioness de la Con-*

under the Superintendance of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge



who was himself a tolerable mathematician, and always cultivated the friendship of men of science, made him Minister of the Interior; but very soon found his mistake in supposing that talents for philosophical investigation were necessarily accompanied by those of a statesman. He is reported to have expressed himself of Laplace in the following way :—“ Géometre du premier rang, il ne tarda pas à se montrer administrateur plus que médiocre. Dès son premier travail, les consuls s’aperçurent qu’ils s’étoient trompés. Laplace ne saisissait aucune question sous son vrai point de vue. Il cherchait des subtilités partout, n’avait que des idées problématiques et portait aufin *l’esprit des infiniments petits* dans l’administration.” Bonaparte removed him accordingly to the *Sénat Conservateur*, of which he was successively Vice-President and Chancellor. The latter office he received in 1813, about which time he was created Count. In 1814 he voted for the deposition of Napoleon, for which he has been charged with ingratitude and meanness. This is yet a party question ; and the present generation need not be hasty in forming a decision which posterity may see reason to reverse. After the first restoration Laplace received the title of Marquis, and did not appear at the Court of Napoleon during the hundred days. He continued his usual pursuits until the year 1827, when he was seized with the disorder which terminated his life on the 5th of May, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. His last words were, “ Ce que nous connaissons est peu de chose ; ce que nous ignorons est immense.” He has left a successor to his name and title, but none to his transcendent powers of investigation.

The name of Laplace is spread to the utmost limits of civilization, as the successor, almost the equal, of Newton. No one, however, who is acquainted with the discoveries of the two, will think there is so much common ground for comparison as is generally supposed. Those of Laplace are all essentially mathematical : whatever could be done by analysis he was sure to achieve. The labours of Newton, on the other hand, show a sagacity in conjecturing which would almost lead us to think that he laid the mathematics on one side, and used some faculty of perception denied to other men, to deduce these results which he afterwards condescended to put into a geometrical form, for the information of more common minds. In the Principia of Newton, the mathematics are not the instruments of discovery but of demonstration ; and, though that work contains much which is new in a mathematical point of view, its principal merit is of quite

another character. The mind of Laplace was cast in a different mould ; and this perhaps is fortunate for science, for while we may safely assert that Laplace would never have been Newton had he been placed in similar circumstances, there is also reason to doubt whether a second Newton would have been better qualified to follow that particular path which was so successfully traversed by Laplace. We shall proceed to give such an idea of the labours of the latter as our limits will allow.

The solution of every mechanical problem, in which the acting forces were known, as in the motions of the solar system, had been reduced by D'Alembert and Lagrange to such a state that the difficulties were only mathematical ; that is, no farther advances could be made, except in pure analysis. We cannot expect the general reader to know what is meant by the words, *solution of a Differential Equation* ; but he may be made aware that there is a process so called, which, if it could be successfully and exactly performed in all cases, would give the key to every motion of the solar system, and render the determination of its present, and the prediction of its future state, a matter of mathematical certainty. Unfortunately, in the present state of analysis, such precision is unattainable ; and its place is supplied by slow and tedious approximations. These were begun by Newton, whose object being to establish the existence of universal gravitation, he was content to show that all the phenomena which might be expected to result, if that theory were true, did actually take place in the solar system. But here, owing to the comparatively imperfect state of mathematical analysis, he could do little more than indicate the cause of some of the principal irregularities of that system. His successors added considerably to the number of phenomena which were capable of explanation, and thereby increased the probability of the hypothesis. Lagrange, the great rival of Laplace, if we consider his discoveries, and his superior in the originality of his views, and the beauty of his analysis, added greatly to the fund ; but it was reserved for the latter to complete the system, and, extending his views beyond the point to which Newton directed his attention, to show that there is no marked phenomenon yet observed by astronomers, regarding the relative motions of the planets or their satellites, but what must necessarily follow, if the law of gravitation be true. We shall select a few instances of the success of his analysis. The average motions of Jupiter and Saturn had been observed to vary ; that of the former being accelerated, and of the latter retarded. This fact, which Euler had attempted in vain to

explain, was linked by Laplace to the general law, and shown to follow from it. A somewhat similar acceleration in the moon's mean motion was demonstrated, as we have observed more fully in the life of Halley, to arise from a small alteration in the form of the earth's orbit, caused by the attraction of the planets. A remarkable law attending the motions of the satellites of Jupiter, viz.—that the mean motion of the first satellite, together with double that of the second, is always very nearly equal to three times that of the third—was so far connected with the general law, that if, in the original formation of the system, that relation had been nearly kept, the mutual attractions, instead of altering it, would tend to bring it nearer the truth. We can here do no more than mention the analysis of the phenomena of the tides, one of the most important and most brilliant of Laplace's performances. Indeed there is no branch of Physical Astronomy, we might almost say of physics in general, which is not materially indebted to him. Superior to Euler in the power of conquering analytical difficulties, he is almost his equal in the universality of his labours.

The great work of Laplace is the 'Mécanique Céleste,' a collection of all that had been done by himself or others, concerning the theory of the universe. It is far above the reach even of the mathematical reader, unless he has given a degree of attention to the subject, which few, at least in our day, will exert. But Laplace was an elegant and clear-headed writer, as well as a profound analyst. He has left, we will not say for the common reader, but for those who possess the first elements of geometry, a compendium of the Mécanique Céleste, in the 'Système du Monde.' This work is free from mathematical details, and, were it his only production, would rank him high among French writers. We recommend it as the best exposition of the present state of our knowledge of the solar system.

But if it be said that Laplace was much indebted to the labours of Lagrange and others, for the methods which form the basis of the Mécanique Céleste, which is undoubtedly true, we have a splendid instance of what might have been expected from him under any circumstances, in the 'Théorie des Probabilités.' The field was here open, for though the leading principles of the science had been laid down, and many difficult problems solved, yet some method was still wanting by which sufficient approximation might be made to problems involving high numbers. In the theory of chances the great complexity of the operations required, soon renders the application of the clearest principles practically impossible; or, we should rather say, would have



GEORGE FREDERIC HANDEL, whom we will venture to call the greatest of musicians, considering the state in which he found his art, and the means at his command, was born at Halle, in the Duchy of Magdeburg, February 24, 1684. He was intended, almost from his cradle, for the profession of the civil law; but, at the early age of seven, he manifested so uncontrollable an inclination, and so decided a talent for the study of music, that his father, an eminent physician, wisely consented to change his destination, and suffered him to continue under the direction of a master those studies, which he had been secretly pursuing with no other guide than his own genius.

Friedrich Zachau, organist of the cathedral church of Halle, was the first and indeed the chief instructor of Handel. He discharged the duties of his office so well, that his pupil, when not nine years old, had become competent to officiate for his teacher, and had composed, it is said, many motets for the service of the church. A set of sonatas, written by him when only ten years old, was in the possession of George III., and probably forms part of the musical library of our present sovereign.

In 1703 Handel went to Hamburg, where the opera was then flourishing under the direction of Reinhard Keiser, a master of deserved celebrity, but whose gaiety and expensive habits often compelled him to absent himself from the theatre. On one of these occasions Handel was appointed to fill his place as conductor. This preference of a junior roused the jealousy of a fellow-performer, named Mattheson, to such a degree that a rencontre took place between the rivals in the street: and Handel was saved from a sword-thrust, which probably would have taken fatal effect, only by the interposition of a music-



after J. Thomson

## HANDEL

*From a Picture in the collection of  
His Majesty at Windsor.*

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score, which he carried buttoned up under his coat. Till this time he had occupied but a very subordinate situation in the orchestra, that of second *ripieno* violin; for from the period of his father's death he had depended wholly on his own exertions, nobly determining not to diminish his mother's rather straitened income by any demands on her for pecuniary assistance. But now an opportunity for making known his powers was arrived; for the continued absence of the conductor Keiser from his post induced the manager to employ Handel in setting to music a drama called *Almeria*. So great was the success of this piece, that it was performed thirty nights without interruption. The year following he composed *Florinda*; and soon after, *Nerone*, both of which were received in as favourable a manner as his first dramatic effort; but not one of these is to be found in the collection formed by George III., and they seem quite unknown to all writers on music, except by their titles.

The success of his operas at Hamburg produced a sum which enabled him to visit Italy. Florence was the first city in which he made any stay. He was there received in the kindest manner by the Grand Duke Giovanni Gaston de Medicis, and produced the opera of *Rodrigo* in 1709, for which he was presented with a hundred sequins, and a service of plate. Thence he proceeded to Venice, where he brought out *Agrippina*, which was received with acclamation, and performed twenty-seven nights successively. It seems that horns and other wind-instruments were in this opera first used in Italy as accompaniments to the voice. Here the charms of his music made an impression on the famous beauty and singer, Signora Vittoria, a lady particularly distinguished by the Grand Duke; but in this, as in every instance of a similar kind, Handel showed no disposition to avail himself of any partialities exhibited in his favour. His thoughts were nearly all absorbed by his art, and it is but just to conclude that he was also influenced by those sentiments of moral propriety which so distinctly marked his conduct through life. It is to be admitted, however, that he was too much inclined to indulge in the pleasures of the table.

On visiting Rome he was hospitably and kindly entertained by the Cardinal Ottoboni, a person of the most refined taste and princely magnificence. Besides his splendid collection of pictures and statues, he possessed a library of music of great extent, and kept in his service an excellent band of performers, which was under the direction of the celebrated Corelli. At one of the parties made by the Cardinal, Handel produced the overture to *Il Trionfo del Tempo*, which

was attempted by the band so unsuccessfully, that the composer, in his hasty manner, snatched the violin from Corelli, and played the most difficult passages with his own hand. The Italian, who was all modesty and meekness, ingenuously confessed that he did not understand the kind of music ; and, when Handel still appeared impatient, only said, “*Ma, caro Sassone, questa musica è nel stilo Francese, di ch’io non m’intendo*”—(“But, my dear Saxon, this music is in the French style, which I do not understand”). And so far Corelli was perfectly right; Handel’s overtures are formed after the model of Lully, though, it is hardly necessary to add, he improved what he imitated. This anecdote indicates the vast superiority in point of execution possessed by the moderns. A learner of two years’ standing would now play the violin part of any of Handel’s overtures at first sight, without a fault.

At Rome Handel composed his *Trionfo del Tempo*, the words of which were written for him by the Cardinal Pamphilii, and a kind of *mystery*, or oratorio, *La Resurrezione*. The former he afterwards brought out in London, with English words by Dr. Morell, under the title of the *Triumph of Time and Truth*. From Rome he went to Naples, where he was treated with every mark of distinction. But he now resolved, notwithstanding the many attempts made to keep him in Italy, to return to Germany ; and in 1710 reached Hanover, where he found a generous patron in the Elector, who subsequently ascended the English throne as George I. Here he met the learned composer, Steffani, who, having arrived at a time of life when retirement becomes desirable, resigned his office of *Maestro di Capella* to the Elector, and Handel was appointed his successor, with a salary of 1500 crowns, upon condition that he would return to the court of Hanover at the termination of his travels.

Towards the end of 1710 Handel arrived in London. He was soon introduced at court, and honoured with marks of Queen Anne’s favour. Aaron Hill was then manager of the Italian opera, and immediately sketched a drama from Tasso’s *Jerusalem*, which Rossi worked into an opera under the name of *Rinaldo*, and Handel set to music. This was brought out in March, 1711 ; and it is stated in the preface that it was composed in a fortnight, a strong recommendation of a work to those who delight in the wonderful rather than in the excellent : but in fact there is nothing in this which could have put the composer to much expense either of time or thought. Handel undoubtedly wrote better operas than any of his contemporaries or predecessors ; but he was controlled by the habits and taste of the day, and knew by experience

that two or three good pieces were as much as the fashionable frequenters of the Italian theatre would listen to, in his time.

At the close of 1711 he returned to Hanover, but revisited London late in 1712; and shortly after was selected, not without many murmurs from English musicians, to compose a *Te Deum* and *Jubilate* on occasion of the peace of Utrecht. The Queen settled on him a pension of two hundred pounds as the reward of his labour,—and as he was solicited to write again for the Italian stage, he never thought of returning to his engagement at Hanover, till the accession of the Elector to the British throne reminded him of his neglect of his royal employer and patron. On the arrival of George I. in London, Handel wanted the courage to present himself at court; but his friend, Baron Kilmansegge, had the address to get him restored to royal favour. The pleasing *Water-Music*, performed during an excursion made up the river by the King, was the means by which the German baron brought about the reconciliation; and this was accompanied by an addition of two hundred pounds to the pension granted by Queen Anne.

From the year 1715 to 1720, Handel composed only three operas. The three first years of this period he passed at the Earl of Burlington's, where he was constantly in the habit of meeting Pope, who, though devoid of any taste for music, always spoke and wrote in a flattering manner of the German composer. The other two years he devoted to the Duke of Chandos, Pope's Timon; and at Cannons, the Duke's seat, he produced many of his anthems, which must be classed among the finest of his works, together with the greater number of his hautbois concertos, sonatas, lessons, and organ fugues.

A project was now formed by several of the English nobility for erecting the Italian theatre into an Academy of Music, and Handel was chosen as manager, with a condition that he should supply a certain number of operas. In pursuance of this, he went to Dresden to engage singers, and brought back with him several of great celebrity, Senesino among the number. His first opera under the new system was *Radamisto*, the success of which was astonishing. But there were at that time two Italian composers in London, Bononcini and Attilio, who till then had been attached to the opera-house, and were not without powerful supporters. These persons did not passively notice the ascendancy of Handel, and the insignificance into which they were in danger of falling; they persuaded several weak and some factious people of noble rank to espouse their cause, and to oppose the German intruder, as they called the new manager. Hence

arose those feuds to which Swift has given immortality by his well-known epigram ; and hence may be traced Handel's retirement from a scene of cabal, persecution, and loss. The final result of this, however, was fortunate, for it led to the production of his greatest works, his oratorios, which not only amply compensated him for all the injury which his fortune sustained in this contest, but raised him to a height of fame which he could never have gained by his Italian operas.

The two contending parties, wishing to appear reasonable, proposed something like terms of accommodation : these were, that an opera in three acts should be composed by the three rivals, one act by each, and that he who best succeeded should for ever after take the precedence. The drama chosen was Muzio Scevola, of which Bononcini set the first act, Handel the second, and Attilio the third. Handel's "won the cause," and Bononcini's was pronounced the next in merit. But, strange to say, though each no doubt strained his ability to the utmost in this struggle, not a single piece in the whole opera is known in the present day, or is, perhaps, to be found, except in the libraries of curious collectors.

This victory left Handel master of the field for some years, and the academy prospered. During this period he brought out about fifteen of his best operas. But the genius of discord must always have a seat in the temple of harmony, and a dispute between the German manager and the Italian soprano, Senesino, renewed former quarrels, broke up the academy, materially damaged the fortune of the great composer, and was the cause of infinite vexation to him during much of his future life.

Dr. Arbuthnot, always a staunch friend of Handel, now became his champion, and his ridicule had more weight with the sensible portion of the public than the futile arguments, if they deserve the name, advanced by the noble supporters of Senesino. But fashion and prejudice were, as usual, too strong for reason : a rival opera-house was opened in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and after having composed several new operas, comprising some of his best, and having sacrificed nearly the whole of his property and injured his health, in a spirited attempt to support the cause of the lyric stage against the presumption of singers, and the folly of their abettors, Handel was at last compelled to terminate his ineffectual labours, and stop his ruinous expenses, by abandoning the contest and the Italian opera together.

The sacred musical drama, or oratorio, was ultimately destined to repair his all but ruined fortune, and to establish his fame beyond the reach of cavil, and for ever. *Esther*, the words of which it

is said were the joint production of Pope and Arbuthnot, was composed for the Duke of Chandos in 1720. In 1732 it was performed ten nights at the Haymarket, or King's Theatre. Deborah was produced in 1733, and in the same year Athalia was brought out at Oxford. These three oratorios were performed at Covent Garden, in the Lent of 1734. Acis and Galatea, and Alexander's Feast, were brought out in 1735; Israel in Egypt, in 1738; L'Allegro ed il Penseroso, in 1739. Saul was produced at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1740. But up to this period his oratorios failed to reimburse him for the expenses incurred; and even the Messiah, that sublime and matchless work, was, as Dr. Burney, Sir John Hawkins, and Handel's first biographer, Mr. Mainwaring, all agree in stating, not only ill attended, but ill received, when first given to the public, in the capital of the empire, in 1741.

Such miscarriages, and a severe fit of illness, the supposed consequence of them, determined him to try his oratorios in the sister kingdom, where he hoped to be out of the reach of prejudice, envy, and hostility. Dublin was at that time noted for the gaiety and splendour of its court, and the opulence and spirit of its principal inhabitants. Handel, therefore, judged wisely in appealing to such a people. Pope in his Dunciad alludes to this part of his history, introducing a poor phantom as representative of the Italian opera, who thus instructs Dullness :—

But soon, ah soon, rebellion will commence,  
If Music meanly borrows aid from sense :  
Strong in new arms, lo ! giant Handel stands,  
Like bold Briareus, with a hundred hands :  
To stir, to rouse, to shake the soul he comes,  
And Jove's own thunders follow Mars's drums.  
Arrest him, empress, or you sleep no more.—  
She heard—and drove him to th' Hibernian shore.

“ On his arrival in Dublin,” we are told by Dr. Burney, in his Commemoration of Handel, “ he, with equal judgment and humanity, began by performing the Messiah for the benefit of the city prison. This act of generosity and benevolence met with universal approbation, as well as his music, which was admirably performed.” He remained in Ireland about nine months, where his finances began to mend, an earnest, as it were, of the more favourable reception which he experienced on returning to London in 1742. He then recommenced his oratorios at Covent Garden; Sampson was the first performed. And now fortune seemed to wait on all his undertakings; and he took the tide at the flood. His last oratorio became most popular, and the Messiah was now received with universal admiration

and applause. Dr. Burney remarks, “ From that time to the present, this great work has been heard in all parts of the kingdom with increasing reverence and delight ; it has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, fostered the orphan,” and, he might have added, healed the sick. Influenced by the most disinterested motives of humanity, Handel resolved to perform his *Messiah* annually for the benefit of the Foundling Hospital, and, under his own direction and that of his successors, it added to the funds of that charity alone the sum of £10,300. How much it has produced to other benevolent institutions, it is impossible to calculate ; the amount must be enormous.

He continued his oratorios till almost the moment of his death, and derived considerable pecuniary advantage from them, though a considerable portion of the nobility persevered in their opposition to him. George II., however, was his steady patron, and constantly attended his performances, when they were abandoned by most of his court.

In the close of life, Handel had the misfortune to lose his sight, from an attack of gutta serena, in 1751. This evil for a time plunged him into deep despondency ; but when the event was no longer doubtful, an earnest and sincere sense of religion enabled him to bear his affliction with fortitude, and he not only continued to perform, but even to compose. For this purpose, he employed as his amanuensis Mr. John Christian Smith, a good musician, who furnished materials for a life of his employer and friend, and succeeded him in the management of the oratorios. “ To see him, however,” Dr. Burney feelingly observes, “ led to the organ after this calamity, at upwards of seventy years of age, and then conducted towards the audience to make his accustomed obeisance, was a sight so truly afflicting to persons of sensibility, as greatly diminished their pleasure in hearing him perform.”

His last appearance in public was on the 6th of April, 1759. He died that day week, on Good-Friday, thus realizing a hope which he expressed a very few days before his decease, when aware that his last hours were approaching. He was buried in Westminster Abbey ; the Dean, Dr. Pearce, Bishop of Rochester, assisted by all the officers of the choir, performed the ceremony. A fine monument, executed by Roubiliac, is placed in Poet’s Corner, above the spot where his mortal remains are deposited ; but a still more honourable tribute to his memory was paid in the year 1784, by the performances which took place under the roof which covers his dust. A century having then elapsed from the time of his birth, it was proposed that a Commemoration of Handel should take place. The management of it was intrusted to the directors of the ancient concert, and eight

of the most distinguished members of the musical profession. The King, George III., zealously patronised the undertaking, and nearly all the upper classes of the kingdom seconded the royal views. A vocal and instrumental band of 525 persons was collected from all parts, for the purpose of performing in a manner never before even imagined, the choicest works of the master. The great aisle in Westminster Abbey was fitted up for the occasion, with boxes for the Royal Family, the Directors, the Bench of Bishops, and the Dean and Prebendaries of the Church; galleries were erected on each side, and a grand orchestra was built over the great west door, extending from within a few feet of the ground, to nearly half-way up the great window. There were four morning performances in the church: the tickets of admission were one guinea each; and the gross receipts (including an evening concert at the Pantheon) amounted to £12,736. The disbursements rather exceeded £6,000, and the profits were given to the Society for Decayed Musicians and the Westminster Hospital; £6,000 to the former, and £1,000 to the latter. Such was the success of this great enterprise, that similar performances, increasing each year in magnitude, took place annually till the period of the French Revolution, when the state of public affairs did not encourage their longer continuance.

As a composer, Handel was great in all styles—from the familiar and airy to the grand and sublime. His instinctive taste for melody, and the high value he set on it, are obvious in all his works; but he felt no less strongly the charms of harmony, in fulness and richness of which he far surpassed even the greatest musicians who preceded him. And had he been able to employ the variety of instruments now in use, some of which have been invented since his death, and to command that orchestral talent, which probably has had some share in stimulating the inventive faculty of modern composers, it is reasonable to suppose that the field of his conceptions would have expanded with the means at his command. Unrivalled in sublimity, he might then have anticipated the variety and brilliance of later masters.

Generally speaking, Handel set his words with deep feeling and strong sense. Now and then he certainly betrayed a wish to imitate by sounds what sounds are incapable of imitating; and occasionally attempted to express the meaning of an isolated word, without due reference to the context. And sometimes, though not often, his want of a complete knowledge of our language led him into errors of accentuation. But these defects, though great in little men, dwindle almost to nothing in this “giant of the art;” and every competent judge,

who contemplates the grandeur, beauty, science, variety, and number of Handel's productions, will feel for him that admiration which Haydn, and still more Mozart, was proud to avow, and be ready to exclaim in the words of Beethoven, “Handel is the unequalled master of all masters! Go, turn to him, and learn, with such scanty means, how to produce such effects!”







Engraved by H Meyer

## PASCAL

From the original picture by Philippe de Champaigne  
in the possession of M Lenoir at Paris.

Under the Superintendance of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge



BLAISE PASCAL was born June 19, 1623, at Clermont, the capital of Auvergne, where his father, Stephen Pascal, held a high legal office. On the death of his wife in 1626, Stephen resigned his professional engagements, that he might devote himself entirely to the education of his family, which consisted only of Blaise, and of two daughters. With this view he removed to Paris.

The elder Pascal was a man of great moral worth, and of a highly cultivated mind. He was known as an active member of a small society of philosophers, to which the Academie Royale des Sciences, established in 1666, owed its origin. Though himself an ardent mathematician, he was in no haste to initiate his son in his own favourite pursuits; but having a notion, not very uncommon, that the cultivation of the exact sciences is unfriendly to a taste for general literature, he began with the study of languages; and notwithstanding many plain indications of the natural bent of his son's genius, he forbade him to meddle, even in thought, with the mathematics. Nature was too strong for parental authority. The boy having extracted from his father some hints as to the subject matter of geometry, went to work by himself, drawing circles and lines, or, as he called them in his ignorance of the received nomenclature, rounds and bars, and investigating and proving the properties of his various figures, till, without help of a book or oral instruction of any kind, he had advanced as far as the thirty-second proposition of the first book of Euclid. He had perceived that the three angles of a triangle are together equal to two right ones, and was searching for a satisfactory proof, when his father surprised him in his forbidden speculations.

the Study of Natural Philosophy, page 230, that “ it tended perhaps more powerfully than any thing which had previously been done in science to confirm in the minds of men that disposition to experimental verification which had scarcely yet taken full and secure root.”

Whatever may be the value of the fruits of Pascal’s genius, it should be remembered that they were all produced within the space of a life which did not number forty years, and that he was so miserably the victim of disease that from the time of boyhood he never passed a day without pain.

His health had probably been impaired by his earlier exertions ; but the intense mental labour expended on the arithmetical machine appears to have completely undermined his constitution, and to have laid the foundation of those acute bodily sufferings which cruelly afflicted him during the remainder of his life. His friends, with the hope of checking the evil, sought to withdraw him from his studies, and tempted him into various modes of relaxation. But the remedy was applied too late. The death of his father in 1651, and the retirement of his unmarried sister from the world to join the devout recluses of Port Royal-des-Champs, released him from all restraint. He sadly abused this liberty, until the frightful aggravation of his complaints obliged him to abandon altogether his scientific pursuits, and reluctantly to follow the advice of his physicians, to mix more freely in general society. He obtained some relief from medicine and change of habits ; but, in 1654, an accident both made his recovery hopeless, and destroyed the relish which he had begun to feel for social life. He was in his carriage on the Pont de Neuilly, at a part of the bridge which was unprotected by a parapet, when two of the horses became unruly, and plunged into the Seine. The traces broke, and Pascal was thus saved from instant death. He considered that he had received a providential warning of the uncertainty of life, and retired finally from the world, to make more earnest preparation for eternity. This accident gave the last shock to his already shattered nerves, and to a certain extent disordered his imagination. The image of his late danger was continually before him, and at times he fancied himself on the brink of a precipice. The evil probably was increased by the rigid seclusion to which from this time he condemned himself, and by the austerities which he inflicted on his exhausted frame. His powerful intellect survived the wreck of his constitution, and he gave ample proof to the last that its vigour was unimpaired.

In his religious opinions he agreed with the Jansenists, and, without being formally enrolled in their society, was on terms of intimate

friendship with those pious and learned members of the sect, who had established themselves in the wilds of Port Royal. His advocacy of their cause at a critical time was so important to his fame and to literature, that a few words may be allowed on the circumstances which occasioned it.

The Jansenists, though they earnestly deprecated the name of heretics, and were most fiercely opposed to the Huguenots and other Protestants, did in fact nearly approach in many points the reformed churches, and departed widely from the fashionable standard of orthodoxy in their own communion. They were in the first instance brought into collision with their great enemies the Jesuits by the opinions which they held on the subjects of grace and free-will. As the controversy proceeded, the points of difference between the contending parties became more marked and more numerous. The rigid system of morals taught and observed by the Jansenists, and the superior regard which they paid to personal holiness in comparison with ceremonial worship, appeared in advantageous contrast with the lax morality and formal religion of the Jesuits. Hence, though there was much that was repulsive in their discipline, and latterly, not a little that was exceptionable in their conduct, they could reckon in their ranks many of the most enlightened as well as the most pious Christians in France. It was natural that Pascal, who was early impressed with the deepest reverence for religion, should be attracted to a party which seemed at least to be in earnest, whilst others were asleep; and it is more a matter of regret than of surprise, that latterly, in his state of physical weakness and nervous excitement, he should have been partially warped from his sobriety by intercourse with men, whose Christian zeal was in too many instances disfigured by a visionary and enthusiastic spirit. The Papal Court at first dealt with them tenderly; for it was in truth no easy matter to condemn their founder Jansenius, without condemning its own great doctor the celebrated Augustin. But the vivacious doctors of the Sorbonne, on the publication of a letter by the Jansenist Arnauld, took fire, and by their eagerness kindled a flame that well nigh consumed their own church.

Whilst they were in deliberation on the misdoings of Arnauld, Pascal put forth under the name of Louis de Montalte the first of that series of letters to "a friend in the country"—à un provincial par un de ses amis—which, when afterwards collected, received by an absurd misnomer, the title of the Provincial Letters of Pascal. In these letters, after having exhibited in a light irresistibly ludicrous, the disputes of

the Sorbonne, he proceeds with the same weapon of ridicule, all powerful in his hand, to hold forth to derision and contempt the profligate casuistry of the Jesuits. For much of his matter he was undoubtedly indebted to his Jansenist friends, and it is commonly said that he was taught by them to reproach unfairly the whole body of Jesuits, with the faults of some obscure writers of their order. These writers, however, were at least well known to the Jesuits, their writings had gone through numerous editions with approbation, and had infused some portion of their spirit into more modern and popular tracts. Moreover, the Society of Jesuits, constituted as it was, had ready means of relieving itself from the discredit of such infamous publications; yet amongst the many works, which by their help found a place in the index of prohibited books, Pascal might have looked in vain for the works of their own Escobar. However this may be, it is universally acknowledged, that the credit of the Jesuits sunk under the blow, that these letters are a splendid monument of the genius of Pascal, and that as a literary work they have placed him in the very first rank among the French classics.

It seems that he had formed a design, even in the height of his scientific ardour, of executing some great work for the benefit of religion. This design took a more definite shape after his retirement, and he communicated orally to his friends the sketch of a comprehensive work on the Evidences of Christianity, which his early death, together with his increasing bodily infirmities, prevented him from completing. Nothing was left but unconnected fragments, containing for the most part his thoughts on subjects apparently relating to his great design, hastily written on small scraps of paper, without order or arrangement of any kind. They were published in 1670, with some omissions, by his friends of Port Royal, and were afterwards given to the world entire, under the title of the *Thoughts of Pascal*. Many of the thoughts are such as we should expect from a man who with a mind distinguished for its originality, with an intimate knowledge of scripture, and lively piety, had meditated much and earnestly on the subject of religion. In a book so published, it is of course easy enough to find matter for censure and minute criticism; but most Christian writers have been content to bear testimony to its beauties and to borrow largely from its rich and varied stores. Among the editors of the *Thoughts of Pascal* are found Condorcet and Voltaire, who enriched their editions with a commentary. With what sort of spirit they entered on their work may be guessed from Voltaire's well known advice to his brother philosopher. "Never be weary, my

friend, of repeating that the brain of Pascal was turned after his accident on the Pont de Neuilly." Condorcet was not the man to be weary in such an employment ; but here he had to deal with stubborn facts. The brain of Pascal produced after the accident not only the *Thoughts*, but also the *Provincial Letters*, and the various treatises on the *Cycloid*, the last of which was written not long before his death.

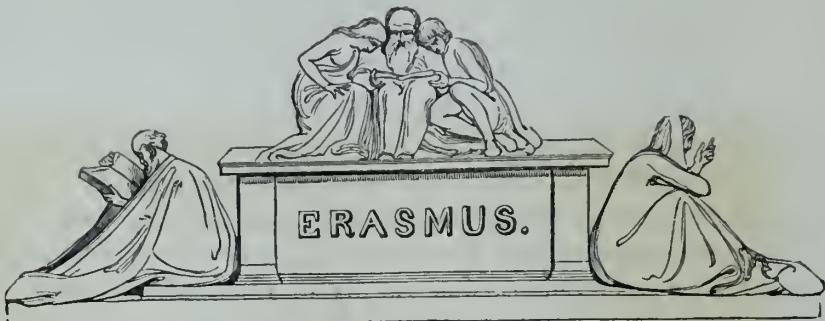
He died August 19th, 1662, aged thirty-nine years and two months.

By those who knew him personally he is said to have been modest and reserved in his manners, but withal, ready to enliven conversation with that novelty of remark and variety of information which might be expected from his well stored and original mind. That spirit of raillery which should belong to the author of the *Provincial Letters*, showed itself also occasionally in his talk, but always with a cautious desire not to give needless pain or offence.

He seemed to have constantly before his eyes the privations and sufferings to which a large portion of the human race is exposed, and to receive almost with trembling, those indulgences which were denied to others. Thus, when curtailing his own comforts that he might perform more largely the duties of charity, he seemed only to be disincumbering himself of that which he could not safely retain.

As a philosopher, it is the great glory of Pascal, that he is numbered with that splendid phalanx, which in the seventeenth century, following the path opened by Galileo, assisted to overthrow the tyranny of the schools, and to break down the fences which for ages had obstructed the progress of real knowledge ; men who were indeed benefactors to science, and who have also left behind them for general use an encouraging proof that the most inveterate prejudices, the most obstinate attachment to established errors, and hostility to improvement may be overcome by resolute perseverance, and a bold reliance on the final victory of truth. No one, however, will coldly measure the honour due to this extraordinary man by his actual contributions to the cause of science or literature. The genius of the child anticipated manhood : his more matured intellect could only show promises of surpassing glory when it escaped from the weak frame in which it was lodged.

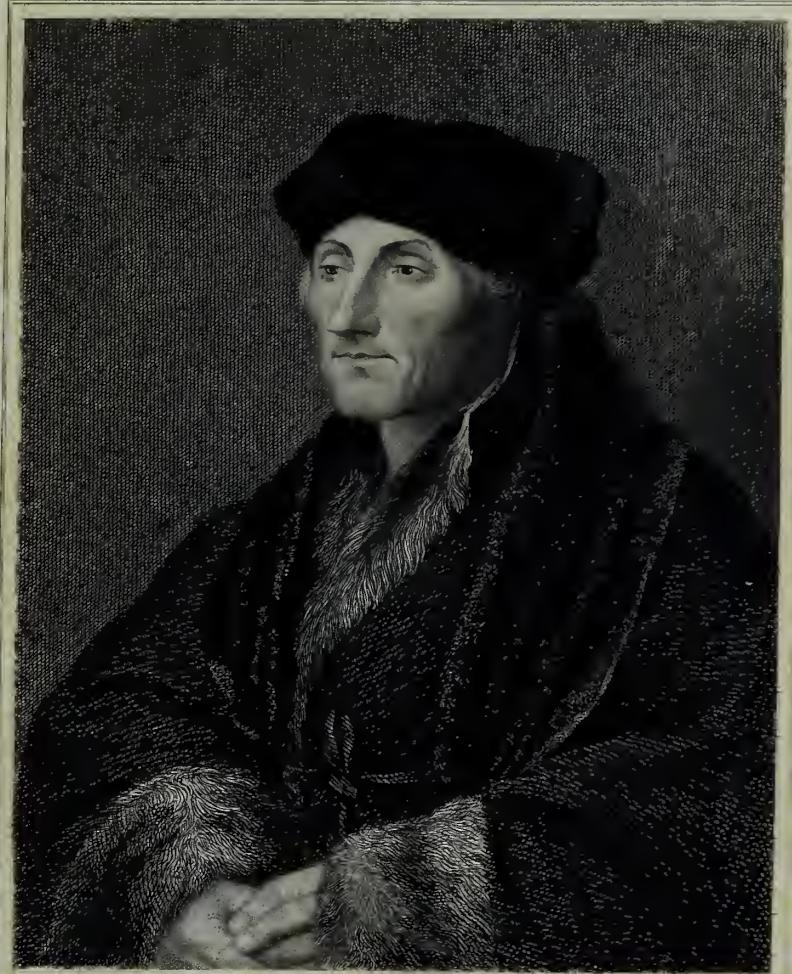
For further information the reader is referred to the discourse on the life and works of Pascal, which first appeared in the complete edition of his works in 1779, and has since been published separately at Paris ; to the *Biographie Universelle* ; and to the life of Pascal, written by his sister, Madame Perier, which is prefixed to her edition of his *Thoughts*.



DESIDERIUS ERASMUS was born at Rotterdam on the 28th of October, 1467. The irregular lives of his parents are related by him in a letter to the secretary of Pope Julius II. It is sufficient to state here, that this great genius and restorer of letters was not born in wedlock. His unsophisticated name, as well as that of his father, was Gerard. This word in the Dutch language means *amiable*. According to the affectation of the period, he translated it into the Latin term, Desiderius, and superadded the Greek synomyme of Erasmus. Late in a life of vicissitude and turmoil, he found leisure from greater evils to lament that he had been so neglectful of grammatical accuracy as to call himself Erasmus, and not Erasmus.

In a passage of the life written by himself, he says that "in his early years he made but little progress in those unpleasant studies to which he was not born;" and this gave his countrymen a notion that as a boy he was slow of understanding. Hereon Bayle observes that those unpleasant studies cannot mean learning in general, for which of all men he was born; but that the expression might apply to music, as he was a chorister in the cathedral church of Utrecht. He was afterwards sent to one of the best schools in the Netherlands, where his talents at once shone forth, and were duly appreciated. His master was so well satisfied with his progress, and so thoroughly convinced of his great abilities, as to have foretold what the event confirmed, that he would prove the envy and wonder of all Germany.

At the age of fourteen Erasmus was removed from the school at Deventer in consequence of the plague, of which his mother died, and his father did not long survive her. With a view to possess themselves of his patrimony, his guardians sent him to three several convents in succession. At length, unable longer to sustain the conflict, he reluctantly entered among the regular canons at Stein, near Tergou, in



Engraved by E. Scriven

## ERASMUS

*From the original Picture by J. C. van  
in his Majesty's Collection at Windsor.*

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1486. Much condescension to his peculiar humour was shown in dispensing with established laws and customary ceremonies ; but he was principally led to make his profession by the arts of his guardians and the dilapidation of his fortune. He describes monasteries, and his own in particular, as destitute of learning and sound religion. "They are places of impiety," he says in his piece 'De Contemptu Mundi,' "where every thing is done to which a depraved inclination can lead, under the mask of religion ; it is hardly possible for any one to keep himself pure and unspotted." Julius Scaliger and his other enemies assert that he himself was deeply tainted by these impurities ; but both himself and his friends deny the charge.

He escaped from the cloister in consequence of the accuracy with which he could speak and write Latin. This rare accomplishment introduced him to the Bishop of Cambray, with whom he lived till 1490. He then took pupils, among whom was the Lord Mountjoy, with several other noble Englishmen. He says of himself, that "he lived rather than studied" at Paris, where he had no books, and often wanted the common comforts of life. Bad lodgings and bad diet permanently impaired his constitution, which had been a very strong one. The plague drove him from the capital before he could profit as he wished by the instructions of the university in theology.

Some time after he left Paris, Erasmus came over to England, and resided in Oxford, where he contracted friendship with all of any note in literature. In a letter from London to a friend in Italy, he says, "What is it, you will say, which captivates you so much in England ? It is that I have found a pleasant and salubrious air ; I have met with humanity, politeness, and learning ; learning not trite and superficial, but deep and accurate ; true old Greek and Latin learning ; and withal so much of it, that but for mere curiosity, I have no occasion to visit Italy. When Colet discourses, I seem to hear Plato himself. In Grocyn, I admire an universal compass of learning. Linacre's acuteness, depth, and accuracy are not to be exceeded ; nor did nature ever form any thing more elegant, exquisite, and accomplished than More."

On leaving England, Erasmus had a fever at Orleans, which recurred every Lent for five years together. He tells us that Saint Genevieve interceded for his recovery ; but not without the help of a good physician. At this time he was applying diligently to the study of Greek. He says, that if he could but get some money, he would first buy Greek books, and then clothes. His mode of acquiring the language was by making translations from Lucian, Plutarch, and other authors. Many of these translations appear in his works, and answered

a double purpose ; for while they familiarized him with the languages, the sentiments and the philosophy of the originals, they also furnished him with happy trains of thought and expression, when he dedicated his editions of the Fathers, or his own treatises, to his patrons.

We cannot follow him through his incessant journeys and change of places during the first years of the sixteenth century. His fame was spread over Europe, and his visits were solicited by popes, crowned heads, prelates, and nobles ; but much as the great coveted his society, they suffered him to remain extremely poor. We learn from his ‘Enchiridion Militis Christiani,’ published in 1503, that he had discovered many errors in the Roman church, long before Luther appeared. His reception at Rome was most flattering : his company was courted both by the learned and by persons of the first rank and quality. After his visit to Italy, he returned to England, which he preferred to all other countries. On his arrival he took up his abode with his friend More, and within the space of a week wrote his ‘Encomium Moriae,’ the Praise of Folly, for their mutual amusement. The general design is to show that there are fools in all stations ; and more particularly to expose the court of Rome, with no great forbearance towards the Pope himself. Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, Chancellor of the University, and Head of Queen’s College, invited him to Cambridge, where he lived in the Lodge, was made Lady Margaret’s Professor of Divinity, and afterwards Greek Professor. But notwithstanding these academical honours and offices, he was still so poor as to apply with importunity to Colet, Dean of St. Paul’s, for fifteen angels as the price of a dedication. “Erasmus’s Walk” in the grounds of Queen’s College still attests the honour conferred on the university by the temporary residence of this great reviver of classical learning.

On his return to the Low Countries, he was nominated by Charles of Austria to a vacant bishopric in Sicily ; but the right of presentation happened to belong to the Pope. Erasmus laughed heartily at the prospect of this incongruous preferment ; and said that as the Sicilians were merry fellows, they might possibly have liked such a bishop.

In the year 1516 he printed his edition, the first put forth in Greek, of the New Testament. We learn from his letters, that there was one college in Cambridge which would not suffer this work to be brought within its walls : but the public voice spoke a different language ; for it went through three editions in less than twelve years. From 1516 to 1526 he was employed in publishing the works of Saint Jerome. Luther blamed him for his partiality to this father. He says, “I

prefer Augustine to Jerome, as much as Erasmus prefers Jerome to Augustine." As far as this was a controversy of taste and criticism, the restorer of letters was likely to have the better of the argument against the apostle of the Reformation.

The times were now become tempestuous. Erasmus was of a placid temper, and of a timid character. He endeavoured to reconcile the conflicting parties in the church; but with that infelicity commonly attendant on mediators, he drew on himself the anger of both. Churchmen complained that his censures of the monks, of their grimaces and superstitions, had paved the way for Luther. On the other hand, Erasmus offended the Lutherans, by protesting against identifying the cause of literature with that of the Reformation. He took every opportunity of declaring his adherence to the see of Rome. The monks, with whom he waged continual war, would have been better pleased had he openly gone over to the enemy: his caustic remarks would have galled them less proceeding from a Lutheran than from a Catholic. But his motives for continuing in the communion of the established church, are clearly indicated in the following passage: "Wherein could I have assisted Luther, if I had declared myself for him and shared his danger? Instead of one man, two would have perished. I cannot conceive what he means by writing with such a spirit: one thing I know too well, that he has brought great odium on the lovers of literature. He has given many wholesome doctrines and good counsels: but I wish he had not defeated the effect of them by his intolerable faults. But even if he had written in the most unexceptionable manner, I had no inclination to die for the sake of truth. Every man has not the courage necessary to make a martyr: I am afraid that, if I were put to the trial, I should imitate St. Peter."

In 1522 he published the works of Saint Hilary. About the same time he published his Colloquies. In this work, among the strokes of satire, he laughed at indulgences, auricular confession, and eating fish on fast-days. The faculty of theology at Paris passed the following censure on the book: "The fasts and abstinences of the church are slighted, the suffrages of the holy virgin and of the saints are derided, virginity is set below matrimony, Christians are discouraged from becoming monks, and grammatical is preferred to theological erudition." Pope Paul III. had little better to propose to the cardinals and prelates commissioned to consider about the reform of the church, than that young persons should not be permitted to read Erasmus's Colloquies. Colineus took a hint from this prohibition:

he reprinted them in 1527, and sold off an impression of twenty-four thousand.

In 1524 a rumour was spread abroad that Erasmus was going to write against Luther, which produced the following characteristic letter from the Great Reformer: “Grace and peace from the Lord Jesus. I shall not complain of you for having behaved yourself as a man alienated from us, for the sake of keeping fair with the Papists ; nor was I much offended that in your printed books, to gain their favour or soften their fury, you censured us with too much acrimony. We saw that the Lord had not conferred on you the discernment, courage, and resolution to join with us in freely and openly opposing these monsters ; therefore we did not expect from you what greatly surpasseth your strength and capacity. We have borne with your weakness, and honoured that portion of the gift of God which is in you . . . . I never wished that deserting your own province you should come over to our camp. You might indeed have favoured us not a little by your wit and eloquence : but as you have not the courage requisite, it is safer for you to serve the Lord in your own way. Only we feared that our adversaries should entice you to write against us, in which case necessity would have constrained us to oppose you to your face. I am concerned that the resentment of so many eminent persons of your party has been excited against you : this must have given you great uneasiness ; for virtue like yours, mere human virtue, cannot raise a man above being affected by such trials. Our cause is in no peril, although even Erasmus should attack it with all his might : so far are we from dreading the keenest strokes of his wit. On the other hand, my dear Erasmus, if you duly reflect on your own weakness, you will abstain from those sharp, spiteful figures of rhetoric, and treat of subjects better suited to your powers.” Erasmus’s answer is not found in the collection of his letters ; but he must have been touched to the quick.

In 1527 he published two dialogues : the first, on ‘The pronunciation of the Greek and Latin Languages ;’ full of learning and curious research : the second, entitled ‘Ciceronianus.’ In this lively piece he ridicules those Italian pedants who banished every word or phrase unauthorized by Cicero. His satire, however, is not directed against Cicero’s style, but against the servility of mere imitation. In a subsequent preface to a new edition of the Tuscan Questions, he almost canonizes Cicero, both for his matter and expression. Julius Scaliger had launched more than one philippic against him for his treatment of the Ciceronians ; but he considered this preface as a kind of penance

for former blasphemies, and admitted it as an atonement to the shade of the great Roman. Erasmus had at this time fixed his residence at Bâsle. He was advancing in years, and complained in his letters of poverty and sickness. Pope Paul III., notwithstanding his Colloquies, professed high regard for him, and his friends thought that he was likely to obtain high preferment. Of this matter Erasmus writes thus : “ The Pope had resolved to add some learned men to the college of Cardinals, and I was named to be one. But to my promotion it was objected, that my state of health would unfit me for that function, and that my income was not sufficient.”

In the summer of 1536 his state of exhaustion became alarming. His last letter is dated June 20, and subscribed thus : “ Erasmus Rot. ægra manu.” He died July 12, in the 59th year of his age, and was buried in the cathedral of Bâsle. His friend Beatus Rhenanus describes his person and manners. He was low of stature, but not remarkably short, well-shaped, of a fair complexion, grey eyes, a cheerful countenance, a low voice, and an agreeable utterance. His memory was tenacious. He was a pleasant companion, a constant friend, generous and charitable. Erasmus had one peculiarity, humorously noticed by himself; namely, that he could not endure even the smell of fish. On this he observed, that though a good Catholic in other respects, he had a most heterodox and Lutheran stomach.

With many great and good qualities, Erasmus had obvious failings. Bayle has censured his irritability when attacked by adversaries ; his editor, Le Clerc, condemns his lukewarmness and timidity in the business of the Reformation. Jortin defends him with zeal, and extenuates what he cannot defend. “ Erasmus was fighting for his honour and his life ; being accused of nothing less than heterodoxy, impiety, and blasphemy, by men whose forehead was a rock, and whose tongue was a razor. To be misrepresented as a pedant and a dunce is no great matter ; for time and truth put folly to flight : to be accused of heresy by bigots, priests, politicians, and infidels, is a serious affair ; as they know too well who have had the misfortune to feel the effects of it.” Dr. Jortin here speaks with bitter fellow-feeling for Erasmus, as he himself had been similarly attacked by the high church party of his day. He goes on to give his opinion, that even for his lukewarmness in promoting the Reformation, much may be said, and with truth. “ Erasmus was not entirely free from the prejudices of education. He had some indistinct and confused notions about the authority of the Catholic Church, which made it not lawful to depart from her, cor-

rupted as he believed her to be. He was also much shocked by the violent measures and personal quarrels of the Reformers. Though, as Protestants, we are more obliged to Luther, Melanethon, and others, than to him, yet we and all the nations in Europe are infinitely indebted to Erasmus for spending a long and laborious life in opposing ignorance and superstition, and in promoting literature and true piety." To us his character appears to be strongly illustrated by his own declaration, "Had Luther written truly every thing that he wrote, his seditious liberty would nevertheless have much displeased me. I would rather even err in some matters, than contend for the truth with the world in such a tumult." A zealous advocate of peace at all times, it is but just to believe that he sincerely dreaded the contests sure to rise from open schism in the church. And it was no unpardonable frailty, if this feeling were nourished by a temperament, which confessedly was not desirous of the palm of martyrdom.

It is impossible to give the contents of works occupying ten volumes in folio. They have been printed under the inspection of the learned Mr. Le Clerc. The biography of Erasmus is to be found at large in Bayle's Dictionary, and the copious lives of Knight and Jortin.



From the bronze statue of Erasmus at Rotterdam.



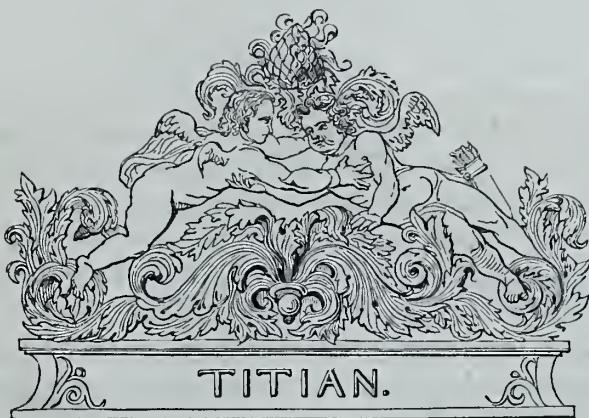


Engraved by R. Field

## OBITUARY

From the Picture of Dean Weller painted by *John*  
*in his Majority Election at Windsor*

Under the Superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge



ON looking back to the commencement of the sixteenth century, by far the most brilliant epoch of modern art, we cannot but marvel at the splendour and variety of talent concentrated within the brief space of half a century, or less. Michael Angelo, Raphael, Correggio, Titian, all fellow-labourers, with many others inferior to these mighty masters, yet whose works are prized by kings and nobles as their most precious treasures—by what strange prodigality of natural gifts, or happy combination of circumstances was so rare an assemblage of genius produced in so short a time? The most obvious explanation is to be found in the princely patronage then afforded to the arts by princes and churchmen. By this none profited more largely or more justly than the great painter, whose life it is our task to relate.

Tiziano Vecelli was born of an honourable family at Capo del Cadore, a small town on the confines of Friuli, in 1480. He soon manifested the bent of his genius, and at the age of ten was consigned to the care of an uncle residing in Venice, who placed him under the tuition of Giovanni Bellini, then in the zenith of his fame. The style of Bellini though forcible is dry and hard, and little credit has been given to him for his pupil's success. It is probable, however, that Titian imbibed in his school those habits of accurate imitation, which enabled him afterwards to unite boldness and truth, and to indulge in the most daring execution, without degenerating into mannerism. The elements of his future style he found first indicated by Leonardo da Vinci, and more developed in the works of Giorgione, who adopted the principles of

Lionardo, but with increased power, amenity, and splendour. As soon as Titian became acquainted with this master's paintings, he gave his whole attention to the study of them ; and with such success, that the portrait of a noble Venetian named Barbarigo, which he painted at the age of eighteen, was mistaken for the work of Giorgione. From that time, during some years, these masters held an equal place in public esteem ; but in 1507 a circumstance occurred which turned the balance in favour of Titian. They were engaged conjointly in the decoration of a public building, called the Fondaco de Tedeschi. Through some mistake that part of the work which Titian had executed, was understood by a party of connoisseurs to have been painted by Giorgione, whom they overwhelmed with congratulations on his extraordinary improvement. It may be told to his credit, that though he manifested some weakness in discontinuing his intercourse with Titian, he never spoke of him without amply acknowledging his merits.

Anxious to gain improvement from every possible source, Titian is said to have drawn the rudiments of his fine style of landscape painting from some German artists who came to Venice about the time of this rupture. He engaged them to reside in his house, and studied their mode of practice until he had mastered their principles. His talents were now exercised on several important works, and it is evident, from the picture of the Angel and Tobias, that he had already acquired an extraordinary breadth and grandeur of style. The Triumph of Faith, a singular composition, manifesting great powers of invention, amid much quaintness of character and costume, is known by a wood engraving published in 1508. A fresco of the Judgment of Solomon, for the Hall of Justice at Vicenza, was his next performance. After this he executed several subjects in the church of St. Anthony, at Padua, taken from the miracles attributed to that saint.

These avocations had withdrawn him from Venice. On his return, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, he was employed to finish a large picture left imperfect by Bellini, or, according to some authorities, by Giorgione, in the great Council Hall of Venice, representing the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa on his knees before Pope Alexander III. at the entrance of St. Mark's. The Senate were so well satisfied with his performance, that they appointed him to the office called La Senseria ; the conditions of which were, that it should be held by the best painter in the city, with a salary of three hundred scudi, he engaging to paint the portrait of each Doge on his election, at the price of eight scudi. These portraits were hung in one of the public apartments of St.

Mark. At the close of 1514 Titian was invited to Ferrara by the Duke Alphonso. For him he executed several splendid works; among them, portraits of the Duke, and of his wife, and that celebrated picture of Bacchus and Ariadne, now in our own National Gallery.

The first works executed by Titian after his return to Venice, prove that he had already accomplished that union of grand design with brilliant colouring, which was designated by Tintoret as the highest perfection of painting. His immense picture of the Assumption, formerly in the church of Santa Maria Gloriosa, and now in the Academy of Venice, exhibits, in the opinion of some first-rate judges, various excellences, such as have never been combined in any single performance, but by Titian himself\*. The Virgin, whose figure relieves dark on the irradiated back-ground, seems to ascend amid a flood of glory. She is surrounded and sustained by angels of ineffable beauty, and the disciples below are personifications of apostolic grandeur. It will scarcely be credited that the Monks, for whom this picture was painted, objected to it on account of its apparent reality; but the voice of public admiration soon made them sensible of its merits, and they refused a large sum offered for it by the Imperial Ambassador. Such a report of this work was made to Leo X. by Cardinal Bembo, that Titian received an invitation to Rome from the Pontiff, with the offer of honourable appointments. A similar proposal from Francis I. of France, whose portrait he painted in 1515, he had already declined; but he yielded to the temptation of visiting Rome, being not less anxious to see the great works of contemporary genius, than the wonders of ancient art. He did not, however, carry his purpose into effect at this time, but remained at Venice; and thus secured to her the possession of those noble works, which, when they were produced, formed the brightest ornament of her power, and even now, when her other glories are set, confer upon her an imperishable distinction.

To recompense in some degree his relinquishment of this invitation, Titian was employed by the Senate to paint the Battle of Cadore, fought between the Venetians and the Imperialists; a splendid production, which perished when the Ducal Palace was burnt. About this time was painted the fine altar-piece of the Pesari Family returning thanks to the Virgin for a victory over the Turks. This picture, as an example of simple grandeur, has been contrasted by Reynolds with the artificial splendour of Rubens; and Fuseli alludes to

\* The writer has been informed by Canova that this was his own opinion, and that of Sir Thomas Lawrence.

it as constituting the due medium between dry apposition and exuberant contrast. The sublime picture of S. Pietro Martire was painted in 1523. Of this it is difficult to speak in adequate terms, without the appearance of hyperbolical panegyric. The composition is well known by engravings ; but these convey only a faint notion of the original, which unites the utmost magnificence of historical design, with the finest style of landscape-painting. The gorgeous hues of Titian's colouring are attempered in this picture by an impressive solemnity. The scene of violence and blood, though expressed with energy, is free from contortion or extravagance ; grandeur pervades the whole, and even the figure of the flying friar has a character of dignity rarely surpassed. Two pictures on the same subject, the one by Domenichino, in the Academy of Bologna, the other by Giorgione, in our National Gallery, if compared with that of Titian, convey a forcible impression of the difference between first-rate genius and the finest talents of a secondary order. The picture of Giorgione is, however, most *Titianesque* in colouring.

In 1526 the celebrated satirist Aretine, and Sansovino the sculptor, came to reside in Venice. With these distinguished men Titian contracted an intimacy, which was the source of great pleasure to him, and ceased only with their lives. When Charles V. visited Bologna in 1529, Titian was invited to that city, where he painted an equestrian portrait of the Emperor. Charles, not only an admirer but a judge of art, was astonished at a style of painting of which he had formed no previous conception ; he remunerated the artist splendidly, and expressed his determination never to sit to any other master. On returning to Bologna in 1532, he summoned Titian again to his court, and engaged him in many important works, treating him on all occasions with extraordinary respect and regard. It is affirmed, that in riding through Bologna he kept upon the artist's right hand, an act of courtesy which excited such displeasure among the courtiers that they ventured upon a remonstrance. The answer given by Charles is well known, and has been since ascribed to other monarchs : " I have many nobles in my empire, but only one 'Titian.'" On leaving Bologna, Titian accompanied Frederic Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, home to his own state ; where, besides painting portraits of the Duke and his brother the Cardinal, he ornamented an apartment of the palace contiguous to the rooms painted by Giulio Romano, with portraits of the twelve Cæsars, taking his authorities from medals and antique marbles.

In passing through Parnia, on the way to Mantua, he first saw the works of Correggio, who had been engaged in painting the dome

of the cathedral. So little was that great man's genius appreciated, and such was the ignorance of his employers, that they had actually dismissed him as inadequate to the task he had undertaken ; nor was he allowed to resume it, until the lavish admiration bestowed on his work by Titian, had taught them better how to estimate his talents.

On returning to Venice, Titian found that a strong party had been raised in favour of Pordenone. He expressed no slight indignation at the attempt to exalt that painter to an equality with himself. Pordenone, nevertheless, was an artist of considerable powers, although certainly not qualified to compete with such an antagonist. The number of pictures which Titian continued to execute, would far exceed our limits to enumerate, and is so great as to excite astonishment ; more especially as there is little evidence in his works that he was much assisted by inferior hands. In 1543, when Pope Paul III. visited Bologna, Titian painted an admirable portrait of him, and received an invitation to Rome. But he was unable to accept it, having engagements with the Duke of Urbino, whose palace he accordingly enriched with portraits of Charles V., Francis I., the Duke Guidobaldo, the Popes Sixtus IV., Julius II., and Paul III., the Cardinal of Lorraine, and Solymán, Emperor of the Turks.

Truth, it appears, rather than embellishment, was sought for in the portraits of those days. Titian's portrait of Paul III. is executed with uncompromising accuracy. The figure is diminutive and decrepit, but the eyes have a look of penetrating sagacity. His Holiness was greatly pleased with it ; and, as a mark of his favour, made offer to the artist of a valuable situation in a public department ; which Titian declined, upon finding that his emoluments were to be deducted from the income of those who already held possession of it. He obtained, however, the promise of a benefice for his son Pomponio. Aretine thought his friend illiberally treated by Paul, and did not scruple to publish his opinion on the subject.

In 1545, when the Venetian Senate was compelled by the public exigencies to lay a general tax on the city, Titian was the only person exempted from the impost,—a noble homage to genius, which attests at once the liberality and the wisdom of that government. In this year, Titian having completed his engagements with the Duke of Urbino, and being, through the Cardinal Farnese, again invited to Rome, determined on a visit to that city ; and he set out, accompanied by his son Orazio, several pupils, and a considerable number of domestics. He was received at Urbino by the Duke Guidobaldo II., and splendidly entertained for some days. On his departure, the Duke

accompanied him from Urbino to Pesaro, and from thence sent forward with him a suite of horses and servants, as far as the gates of Rome. Here he was greeted with corresponding honours, and lodged in the Belvedere Palace. Vasari was, at this time, in the employment of Cardinal Farnese, and had the gratification of attending the great artist about the city. Titian was now engaged to paint a whole length portrait of Paul III., with the Cardinal Farnese and Duke Ottavio in one group. This picture is at present in the Museo Borbonico ; and is a fine example of that highest style of portrait painting, which is scarce less difficult, or less elevated as a branch of art, than historical composition. An “*Ecce homo*,” painted at the same time, does not appear to have excited that admiration which his works usually obtained. The taste of the Roman artists and connoisseurs had been formed on the severe examples of Michael Angelo, Raphael, Polidoro, and others ; so that the style of Titian was tried by a new and conventional standard, to which it was not fairly amenable. It was insinuated that his chief excellence lay in portrait-painting. Vasari relates that, in company with Michael Angelo, he made a visit to Titian at the Belvedere, and found him employed on the celebrated picture of Danae. Michael Angelo bestowed high commendations on it ; but, as they went away, remarked to Vasari on Titian’s inaccurate style of design, observing, that if he had received his elementary education in a better school, his works would have been inimitable. Nothing, perhaps, has tended more than this anecdote to give currency to a belief that Titian was an unskilful draughtsman ; an opinion which, if tried by the test of his best works, is utterly erroneous. There is not perhaps extant on canvass a more exquisite representation of female beauty, even in point of design, than this figure of Danae ; and, with due reverence to the high authority of Michael Angelo, it may be doubted whether his notion of correct design was not tinctured by the ideal grandeur of his own style ; which, however magnificent in itself, and appropriate to the scale of the Sistine chapel, is by no means a just medium for the forms of actual nature, nor adapted to the representation of beauty. Michael Angelo however frequently returned to look at this Danae, and always with expressions of increased admiration.

After a residence of two years at Rome, Titian returned to Venice, taking Florence in his route. The first work on which he engaged after his return, was a picture of the Marquis del Vasto haranguing his troops. He likewise began some altar-pieces, but finished little, being summoned in 1550, by the Emperor Charles, to Vienna. The princes

and ministers assembled at the Imperial Court were astonished at the confidence with which Titian was honoured by the Emperor, who gave him free access to his presence at all times, a privilege extended only to his most intimate friends. The large sums which the Emperor frequently sent him, were always accompanied with the courteous assurance that they were meant to testify the monarch's sense of his merits, not in payment for his works, those being beyond all price. On one occasion, while the Emperor was sitting for his portrait, Titian dropt a pencil ; the monarch picked it up, and presented it to him, saying, on Titian's apologizing in some confusion, "Titian is worthy to be served by Cæsar." The same jealous feeling which had been evinced towards him at Bologna, again manifested itself ; but the artist, who amidst his loftier studies had not neglected the cultivation of worldly knowledge, found means to obviate envy, and to conciliate, by courtesy and presents, the good will of the whole court. It was at this time that Charles, sated with glory and feeling the advances of infirmity, began to meditate his retreat from the world. This intention, it is said, he imparted to Titian, with whom he delighted to confer concerning the arrangement of a large picture, which he then commissioned the artist to paint, and which he intended to be his companion in his retirement. The subject was an apotheosis, in which Charles and his family were to be represented as introduced by Religion into the presence of the Trinity. At Innspruck, whither he accompanied the Emperor, Titian painted a superb picture, in which Ferdinand, King of the Romans, and his Queen Anna Maria, are represented with the attributes of Jupiter and Juno, and round them are the seven princesses, their daughters. From each of these illustrious ladies, Titian received a jewel each time they sat to him. Here also he collected portraits for the apotheosis.

On the Emperor's departure for Flanders, Titian returned to Venice ; where, soon after his arrival, he offered to finish the works which were wanting in the great hall of the council. This offer was cordially accepted by the Senate ; and he was empowered to select the artists whom he thought best qualified to be his coadjutors. He nominated Paul Veronese and Tintoret, nor did those great painters feel themselves humiliated in working under his directions. In 1553 the Emperor Charles returned to Spain, and being at Barcelona, nominated Titian a Count Palatine of the empire, with all the privileges, authority, and powers attached to that dignity. He also created him a Knight of the Golden Spur, and a noble of the empire, transmitting the dignity to his legitimate children and descendants. Crowned with these honours, and with faculties scarcely impaired, Titian had now

reached his seventy-fifth year ; and it would be difficult to select a man the evening of whose life has been more fortunate and happy. He still found in the practice of his art a source of undiminished pleasure ; his works were sought by princes with emulous avidity ; he was considered the chief ornament of the city in which he dwelt. He was surrounded by friends distinguished by their worth or talents ; he had acquired wealth and honour sufficient to satisfy his utmost ambition ; and he was secure of immortal fame !

But at this period, to most men one of secession from toil, Titian engaged in new undertakings with as much alacrity as if life were still beginning, and the race of fortune still to run. He enriched Serravalle, Braganza, Milan, and Brescia, with splendid works, besides painting a great number for the churches of Venice, for different noblemen, and for his friends. Philip II. of Spain showed no less anxiety to possess his works, than Charles, his father, had done : and nowhere perhaps, not even in Venice, are so many of his pictures to be found, as in the palaces of Madrid and the Escorial. When Rubens was in Spain, he copied Titian's picture of Eve tempting Adam with the fatal fruit, nobly acknowledging that he had only made a Flemish translation of an elegant Italian poem. It is said by some of Titian's biographers, that he himself made a visit to Spain ; but this has been clearly disproved. The most important works which he executed for Philip II. are the pictures of the Martyrdom of St. Lorenzo, and the Last Supper. In the first, three different effects of light are admirably expressed ; the fire which consumes the saint, the flame of a tripod placed before a pagan deity, and the glory of a descending angel. This picture is said to be equal to any of his earlier productions. The Last Supper betrays signs of a feebler execution, which is, however, atoned for by more than usual purity of design. Titian in this work partially imitated Leonardo da Vinci, but in the spirit of congenial feeling, not as a plagiarist. To this picture, which he began at the age of eighty, he devoted the labour of nearly seven years. For Mary of England, Philip II.'s consort, he painted four mythological subjects, Prometheus, Tityus, Sisiphus, and Tantalus, the figures as large as life, and conceived in the highest style of grandeur.

In 1570 died Sansovino the sculptor. Aretine had paid the debt of nature some years before, an event which sensibly affected Titian ; and this second loss plunged him into such affliction, that his powers, it is said, from that time perceptibly gave way. We learn, however, from Ridolfi, that the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, which he saw when in good condition, was ably executed. Some visions from

the Apocalypse, in the monastery of St. John, painted about the same time, exhibit vivid imagination and fine colouring.

Henry III. of France, being in Venice in 1574, paid Titian a visit, accompanied by a numerous train. The venerable artist, then in his ninety-fifth year, received the monarch with dignified respect; his fine person was scarcely touched by decrepitude, his manners were still noble and prepossessing. In a long conversation with the King, he adverted, with the complacency natural to an old man at the close of so splendid a career, to honours which he had received from the Emperor Charles and King Ferdinand. When Henry, in walking through the galleries, demanded the prices of some of the pictures, he begged his Majesty's acceptance of them as a free gift. In the mean time the courtiers and attendants were entertained with a magnificence, which might have become the establishment of a great prince.

Titian had nearly attained his hundredth year, when the plague, which had been raging some time in Trent, made its appearance in Venice, and swept him off, together with a third part of the inhabitants, within three months. He was buried in the church of the Frari; but the consternation and disorders prevalent at such a period, prevented his receiving those funeral honours which would otherwise have attended him to the tomb.

In comparing Titian with the great artists of the Roman and Florentine schools, it has been usual to describe him as the painter of physical nature, while to those masters has been assigned the loftier and exclusive praise of depicting the mind and passions. The works on which Titian was most frequently employed, appertaining to public edifices and the pomp of courts, were certainly of a class in which splendid effect is the chief requisite; but can it be said that the painter of the Ascension of the Virgin, and the S. Pietro Martire, was unequal to cope with subjects of sublimity and pathos? May it not be asked with greater justice, on the evidence of those pictures, whether any artist has surpassed him in those qualities? Even in design, on which point his capacity has been especially arraigned, Titian knew how to seize the line of grandeur without swelling into exaggeration, and to unite truth with ideality. Of all painters he was most above the ostentation of art; like Nature herself, he worked with such consummate skill that we are sensible of the process only by its effect. Rubens, Tintoret, Paul Veronese, were proud of their execution; few painters are not,—but the track of Titian's pencil

is scarcely ever discernable. His chiar-oscuro, or disposition of light and shade, is never artificially concentrated ; it is natural, as that of a summer's day. His colouring, glorious as it is, made up of vivid contrasts, and combining the last degree of richness and depth with freshness and vivacity, is yet so graduated to the modesty of nature, that a thought of the painter's palette never disturbs the illusion. Were it required to point out, amidst the whole range of painting, one performance as a proof of what art is capable of accomplishing, it is surely from among the works of Titian that such an example would be selected.

There is scarcely any large collection in which the works of Titian are not to be found. The pictures of Actaeon and Callisto in the possession of Lord F. L. Gower, and the four subjects in the National Gallery, are among the finest in this country. The Venus in the Dulwich Gallery must have been fine; but the glazing, a very essential part of Titian's process, has flown.

Details of the life of Titian will be found in Vasari, Lanzi, Ridolfi, but more especially in Ticozzi, whose memoir is at once diffuse and perspicuous. There is a life of Titian, in English, by Northcote.



Titian and Francisco di Mosaico, from a picture by Titian.



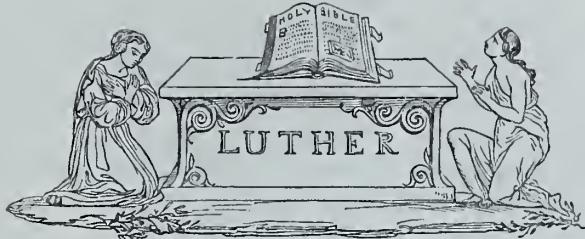


Engraved by C E Wagstaff

## L U T H E R

From the original Picture by Holbein  
in his Majesty's Collection at Windsor

Under the superintendance of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge



MARTIN LUTHER was born at Eisleben in Saxony in the year 1483, on the 10th of November ; and if in the histories of great men it is usual to note with accuracy the day of their nativity, that of Luther has a peculiar claim on the biographer, since it has been the especial object of horoscopic calculations, and has even occasioned some serious differences among very profound astrologers. Luther has been the subject of unqualified admiration and eulogy : he has been assailed by the most virulent calumnies ; and, if any thing more were wanted to prove the *personal* consideration in which he was held by his contemporaries, it would be sufficient to add, that he has also been made a mask for their follies.

He was of humble origin. At an early age he entered with zeal into the Order of Augustinian Hermits, who were Monks and Mendicants. In the schools of the Nominalists he pursued with acuteness and success the science of sophistry. And he was presently raised to the theological chair at Wittemberg : so that his first prejudices were enlisted in the service of the worst portion of the Roman Catholic Church ; his opening reason was subjected to the most dangerous perversion ; and a sure and early path was opened to his professional ambition. Such was *not* the discipline which could prepare the mind for any independent exertion ; such were not the circumstances from which an ordinary mind could have emerged into the clear atmosphere of truth. In dignity a Professor, in theology an Augustinian, in philosophy a Nominalist, by education a Mendicant Monk, Luther seemed destined to be a pillar of the Roman Catholic Church, and a patron of all its corruptions.

But he possessed a genius naturally vast and penetrating, a memory  
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proved by any experience the firmness of his own character. He yielded—at least so far as to express his perfect submission to the commands of the Pope, to exhort his followers to persist in the same obedience, and to promise silence on the subject of indulgences, provided it were also imposed upon his adversaries.

It is far too much to say (as some have said) that had Luther's concession been carried into effect, the Reformation would have been stifled in its birth. The principles of the Reformation were too firmly seated in reason and in truth, and too deeply ingrafted in the hearts of the German people, to remain long suppressed through the infirmity of any individual advocate. But its progress might have been somewhat retarded, had not the violence of its enemies afforded it seasonable aid. A doctor named Eckius, a zealous satellite of papacy, invited Luther to a public disputation in the castle of Pleissenburg. The subject on which they argued was the supremacy of the Roman pontiff; and it was a substantial triumph for the Reformer, and no trifling insult to papal despotism, that the appointed arbiters left the question undecided.

Eckius repaired to Rome, and appealed in person to the offended authority of the Vatican. His remonstrances were reiterated and inflamed by the furious zeal of the Dominicans, with Caietan at their head. And thus Pope Leo, whose calmer and more indifferent judgment would probably have led him to accept the submission of Luther, and thus put the question for the moment at rest, was urged into measures of at least unseasonable vigour. He published a bull on the 15th of June, 1520, in which he solemnly condemned forty-one heresies extracted from the writings of the Reformer, and condemned these to be publicly burnt. At the same time he summoned the author, on pain of excommunication, to confess and retract his pretended errors within the space of sixty days, and to throw himself upon the mercy of the Vatican.

Open to the influence of mildness and persuasion, the breast of Luther only swelled more boldly when he was assailed by menace and insult. He refused the act of humiliation required of him; more than that, he determined to anticipate the anathema suspended over him, by at once withdrawing himself from the communion of the church; and again, having come to that resolution, he fixed upon the manner best suited to give it efficacy and publicity. With this view, he caused a pile of wood to be erected without the walls of Wittemberg, and there, in the presence of a vast multitude of all ranks and orders, he committed the bull to the flames; and with it, the Decree, the Decretals, the Clementines, the Extravagants, the entire code of

Romish jurisprudence. It is necessary to observe, that he had prefaced this measure by a renewal of his former appeal to a General Council; so that the extent of his resistance may be accurately defined: he continued a faithful member of the Catholic Church, but he rejected the despotism of the Pope, he refused obedience to an unlimited and usurped authority. The bull of excommunication immediately followed (January 6, 1521), but it fell without force; and any dangerous effect, which it might otherwise have produced, was obviated by the provident boldness of Luther.

Here was the origin of the Reformation. This was the irreparable breach, which gradually widened to absolute disruption. The Reformer was now compromised, by his conduct, by his principles, perhaps even by his passions. He had crossed the bounds which divided insubordination from rebellion, and his banners were openly unfurled, and his legions pressed forward on the march to Rome. Henceforward the champion of the Gospel entered with more than his former courage on the pursuit of truth; and having shaken off one of the greatest and earliest of the prejudices in which he had been educated, he proceeded with fearless independence to examine and dissipate the rest.

Charles V. succeeded Maximilian in the empire in the year 1519; and since Frederic of Saxony persisted in protecting the person of the Reformer, Leo X. became the more anxious to arouse the imperial indignation in defence of the injured majesty of the Church. In 1521 a diet was assembled at Worms, and Luther was summoned to plead his cause before it. A safe-conduct was granted him by the Emperor; and on the 17th of April he presented himself before the august aristocracy of Germany. This audience gave occasion to the most splendid scene in his history. His friends were yet few, and of no great influence; his enemies were numerous, and powerful, and eager for his destruction: the cause of truth, the hopes of religious regeneration, appeared to be placed at that moment in the discretion and constancy of one man. The faithful trembled. But Luther had then cast off the encumbrances of early fears and prepossessions, and was prepared to give a free course to his earnest and unyielding character. His manner and expressions abounded with respect and humility; but in the matter of his public apology he declined in no one particular from the fulness of his conviction. Of the numerous opinions which he had by this time adopted at variance with the injunctions of Rome, there was not one which in the hour of danger he consented to compromise. The most violent exertions were made by the papal party to effect his immediate ruin; and there were some

dity, from the faith in which he had been educated. He admitted the real corporeal presence in the elements, and differed from the church only as to the manner of that presence. He rejected the actual and perfect change of substance, but supposed the flesh to subsist in, or with the bread, as fire subsists in red-hot iron. Consequently, he renounced the term transubstantiation, and substituted consubstantiation in its place. In the mean time, Zuinglius, the reformer of Zurich, had examined the same question with greater independence, and had reached the bolder conclusion, that the bread and wine are no more than external signs, intended to revive our recollections and animate our piety. This opinion was adopted by Carlstadt, *Æcolampadius*, and other fathers of the Reformation, and followed by the Swiss Protestants, and generally by the free cities of the Empire. Those who held it were called Sacramentarians. The opinion of Luther prevailed in Saxony, and in the more northern provinces of Germany.

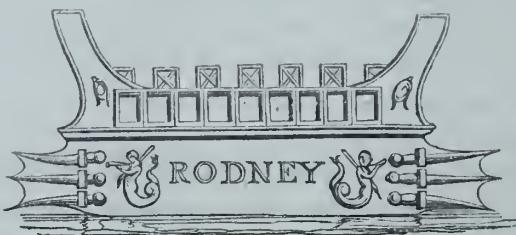
The difference was important. It was felt to be so by the reformers themselves ; and the Lutheran party expressed that sentiment with too little moderation. The Papists, or Papalins (*Papalini*), were alert in perceiving the division, in exciting the dissension, and in inflaming it, if possible, into absolute schism ; and in this matter it must be admitted, that Luther himself was too much disposed by his intemperate vehemence to further their design. These discords were becoming dangerous ; and in 1529, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, the most ardent among the protectors of the Reformation, assembled the leading doctors of either party to a public disputation at Marpurg. The particulars of this conference are singularly interesting to the theological reader ; but it is here sufficient to mention, without entering into the doctrinal merits of the controversy, that whatever was imperious in assertion and overbearing in authority, and unyielding and unsparing in polemical altercation, proceeded from the mouth and party of Luther ; that every approach to humility, and self-distrust, and mutual toleration, and common friendship, came from the side of Zuinglius and the Sacramentarians. And we are bound to add, that the same uncompromising spirit, which precluded Luther from all co-operation or fellowship with those whom *he thought* in error (it was the predominant spirit of the church which he had deserted) continued on future occasions to interrupt and even endanger the work of his own hands. But that very spirit was the vice of a character, which endured no moderation or concession in any matter wherein Christian truth was concerned, but which too hastily assumed its own infallibility in ascertaining that truth. Luther would have excommunicated the Sacramentarians ; and he did not

perceive how precisely his *principle* was the same with that of the church which had excommunicated himself.

Luther was not present at the celebrated Diet of Augsburg, held under the superintendence of Charles V. in 1530; but he was in constant correspondence with Melancthon during that fearful period, and in the reproofs which he cast on the temporizing, though perhaps necessary, negotiations of the latter, he at least exhibited his own uprightness and impetuosity. The 'Confession' of the Protestants, there published, was constructed on the basis of seventeen articles previously drawn up by Luther; and it was not without his counsels that the faith, permanently adopted by the church which bears his name, was finally digested and matured. From that crisis the history of the Reformation took more of a political, less of a religious character, and the name of Luther is therefore less prominent than in the earlier proceedings. But he still continued for sixteen years longer to exert his energies in the cause which was peculiarly his own, and to influence by his advice and authority the new ecclesiastical system.

He died in the year 1546, the same, as it singularly happened, in which the Council of Trent assembled, for the self-reformation and re-union of the Roman Catholic Church. But that attempt, even had it been made with judgment and sincerity, was then too late. During the twenty-nine years which composed the public life of Luther, the principles of the Gospel, having fallen upon hearts already prepared for their reception, were rooted beyond the possibility of extirpation; and when the great Reformer closed his eyes upon the scene of his earthly toils and glory, he might depart in the peaceful confidence that the objects of his mission were virtually accomplished, and the work of the Lord placed in security by the same heaven-directed hand which had raised it from the dust.



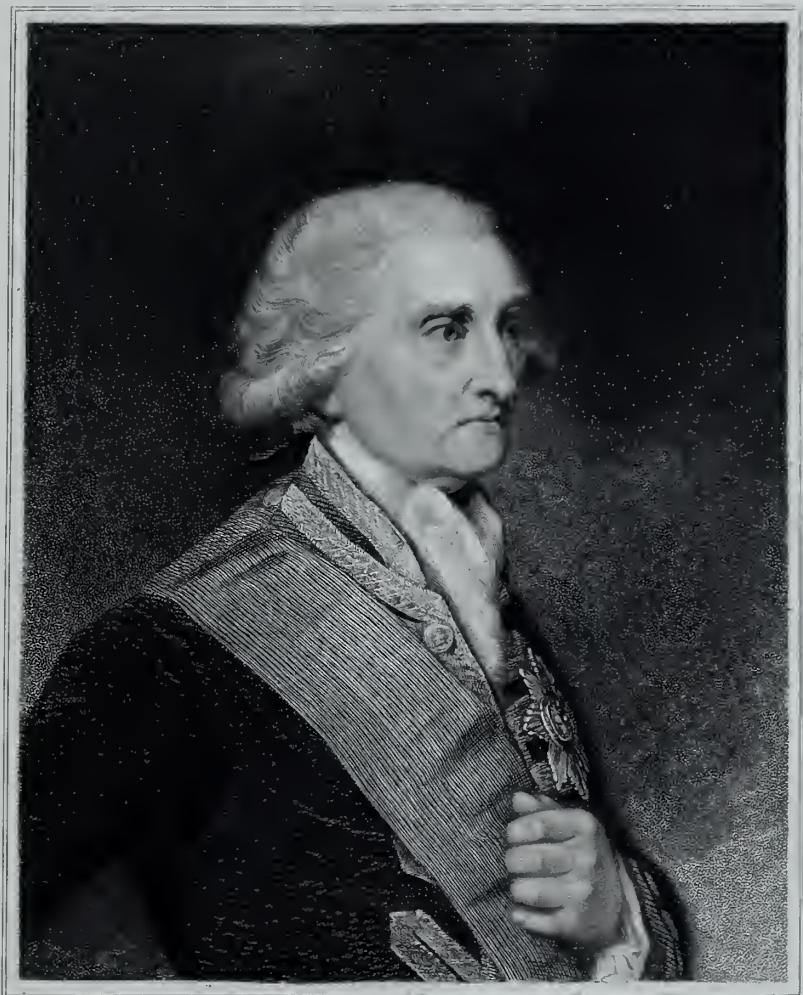


THIS eminent officer was descended from a younger branch of an ancient family, long resident in the county of Somerset. His father lived at Walton upon Thames, where George Brydges Rodney, afterwards Lord Rodney, was born, February 19, 1718. He received the rudiments of his education at Harrow School, from which he was removed when only twelve years old, and sent to sea. He gained promotion rapidly, being made Lieutenant in February, 1739, and Captain in 1742. He was still farther fortunate in being almost constantly employed for several years. In the *Eagle*, of sixty guns, Captain Rodney bore a distinguished part in the action fought by Admiral Hawke with the French fleet, off Cape Finisterre, October 14, 1747. The year after he was sent out with the rank of Commodore, as Governor and Commander-in-Chief on the Newfoundland station, where he remained till October, 1752.

Returning to England, he took his seat in Parliament for the borough of Saltash, and was successively appointed to the *Fougueux*, of sixty-four guns, the *Prince George*, of ninety, and the *Dublin*, of seventy-four guns. In the last-named ship he served under Admiral Hawke in the expedition against Rochefort in 1757, which failed entirely, after great expense had been incurred, and great expectations raised ; and he assisted at the capture of Louisburg by Admiral Boscawen in 1758. He was raised to the rank of Rear-Admiral, May 19, 1759, after twenty-eight years of active and almost uninterrupted service.

In July following he was ordered to take the command of a squadron destined to attack Havre, and destroy a number of flat-bottomed boats, prepared, it was supposed, to assist a meditated invasion of Great Britain. This service he effectually performed.

He was soon raised to a more important sphere of action, being named Commander-in-Chief at Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands, in the autumn of 1761. No naval achievement of remarkable brilliance occurred during the short period of his holding this command : but



Engraved by E. Scriven

## LORD RODNEY

*From a Picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds  
in his Majesty's Collection at St James's Palace*

Under the Superintendance of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge



the capture of the valuable islands of Martinique, St. Lucia, and Grenada, bears testimony to the efficiency of the fleet under his orders, and the good understanding between the land and sea forces employed in this service. He was recalled on the conclusion of peace in 1763. Eight years elapsed before he was again called into service ; a period fruitful in marks of favour from the crown, though barren of professional laurels. He was created a Baronet soon after his return ; he was raised by successive steps to the rank of Vice-Admiral of the Red ; and he was appointed Governor of Greenwich Hospital. This office he was required to resign on being again sent out to the West Indies as Commander-in-Chief at Jamaica in 1771. This was a period of profound peace : but the duties of peace are often more difficult, and require more moral courage for their discharge, than those of war. It is one of Rodney's best claims to distinction, that he suffered none under his command, or within the sphere of his influence, to neglect their duties with impunity : and in the mode of carrying on naval affairs then practised in the West Indies, he found much ground for immediate interference, as well as for representation and remonstrance to his superiors at home. He earnestly desired to obtain the government of Jamaica ; but on a vacancy occurring in 1773, another person was appointed ; and he was recalled, and struck his flag at Portsmouth, September 4, 1774.

The next four years of Sir George Rodney's life were much harassed by pecuniary embarrassment. The habits of a sailor's life are proverbially unsuited to strict economy : and moving, when at home, in the most fashionable society of London, it is no wonder that his expenses outran his professional gains. He was compelled to retire to Paris, where he remained until the American war afforded a prospect of his being called into active service again. In May, 1778, he was promoted to the rank of Admiral of the White : but it was not till the autumn of 1779 that he was gratified by being re-appointed to the command on the Barbadoes station. He sailed from Plymouth December 29, to enter on the final and crowning scene of his glory.

At this time Spain and France were at war with England. The memorable siege of Gibraltar was in progress, and a Spanish fleet blockaded the Straits. The British navy was reduced unwarrantably low in point of disposable force ; and was farther crippled by a spirit of disunion and jealousy among its officers, arising partly perhaps from the virulence of party politics, and partly from the misconduct of the Admiralty, which threatened even worse consequences than the mere want of physical force. By this spirit Sir George Rodney's

fleet was deeply tainted, to his great mortification and the great injury of the country. At first, however, every thing appeared to prosper. The fleet consisted of twenty-two sail of the line, and eight frigates. Before Rodney had been at sea ten days, he captured seven Spanish vessels of war, with a large convoy of provisions and stores ; and on January 16, near Cape St. Vincent, afterwards made memorable by a more important action, he encountered a Spanish fleet commanded by Don Juan de Langara, of eleven ships of the line and two frigates. The superiority of the British force rendered victory certain. Five Spanish ships were taken, and two destroyed ; and had not the action been in the night, and in tempestuous weather, probably every ship would have been captured. These at least are the reasons which Rodney gave in his despatches, for not having done more : in private letters he hints that he was ill-supported by his captains. Trifling as this success would have seemed in later times, it was then very acceptable to the country ; and the Admiral received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament. The scandalous feeling of jealousy of their commander, ill-will to the ministry, or whatever other modification of party spirit it was, which could prevent brave men (and such they were) from performing their duty to the utmost in the hour of battle, broke out again with more violence when Rodney next came within sight of the enemy. This was near Martinique, April 17, 1780, about a month after his arrival in the West Indies. The French fleet, commanded by the Comte de Guichen, was slightly superior in force. Rodney's intention was to attack the enemy's rear in close order and with his whole strength ; but his captains disobeyed his orders, deranged his plan, and careless of the signals for close action, repeatedly made, kept for the most part at cautious distance from the enemy. His own ship, the Sandwich, engaged for an hour and a half a seventy-four and two eighty-gun ships, compelled them to bear away, and broke completely through the enemy's line. Not more than five or six ships did their duty. Had all done it, the victory over De Grasse might have been anticipated, and the end of the war accelerated perhaps by two years. In his despatches Rodney censured the conduct of his captains ; but the Admiralty thought proper to suppress the passage. In his private letters to Lady Rodney, he complains bitterly. One only of his captains was brought to trial, and he was broken. That ampler justice was not done on the delinquents, is to be explained by the difficulty of finding officers to form courts martial, where almost all were equally guilty. But this partial severity, with the vigorous measures which the Admiral took to recall others to their duty, pro-

duced due effect, and we hear no more of want of discipline, or reluctance to engage. For this action Rodney received the thanks of the House of Commons, with a pension for himself and his family of £2000 per annum.

Nothing of importance occurred during the rest of the spring ; and De Guichen having returned to Europe, Rodney sailed to New York, to co-operate, during the rainy season in the West Indies, with the British forces engaged in the American war. In November he returned to his station. In the course of the autumn he had been chosen to represent Westminster without expense, and had received the Order of the Bath. The commencement of the following year was signalized by acts of more importance. The British ministry had been induced to declare war against Holland ; and they sent out immediate instructions to Rodney, to attack the possessions of the states in the West Indies. St. Eustatius was selected for the first blow, and it surrendered without firing a shot. Small and barren, yet this island was of great importance for the support which it had long afforded to the French and Americans under colour of neutrality, and for the vast wealth which was captured in it. In the course of the spring, Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice, with the French island of St. Bartholomew, were also taken.

In the autumn, Rodney returned to Europe for the recovery of his health. He was received with distinguished favour by the King, and with enthusiasm by the people, and during his stay, was created Vice-Admiral of Great Britain, in the place of Lord Hawke, deceased. He returned in the middle of January, being invested with the command of the whole West Indies, not merely the Barbadoes station, as before. The situation of affairs at this time was very critical. The French fleet, commanded by the Comte de Grasse, consisted of thirty-three sail\* of the line, two fifty-gun ships and frigates, with a large body of troops, and a train of heavy cannon on board. A powerful Spanish fleet was also in the West Indies. It was intended to form a junction, and then with an overwhelming force of near fifty sail of the line, to proceed to Jamaica, conquer that important island, and one by one to reduce all the British colonies.

The French quitted Fort Royal Bay, in Martinique, April 8, 1782. Intelligence was immediately brought to the British fleet at St. Lucia, which lost no time in following them. In a partial action on the 9th, two of the French ships were disabled. A third was crippled by

\* Or thirty-four, according to the official list found on board the Ville de Paris after the engagement.

accident on the night of the 11th. Thus, on the morning of the 12th, the decisive day, the French line was reduced to thirty or thirty-one ships, and numerically the British fleet was stronger: but this difference was more than compensated by the greater weight of metal in the French broadside, which was calculated by Sir Charles Douglas to have exceeded the British by 4396 pounds. On that morning, about seven o'clock, Rodney bore down obliquely on the French line, and passed to leeward of it on the opposite tack. His own ship was the eighteenth from the van: and the seventeen leading ships having pushed on and taken their position each abreast of an enemy, Rodney, in the *Formidable*, broke through the line between the seventeenth and eighteenth ships, engaged the *Ville de Paris*, De Grasse's flag-ship, and compelled her to strike. The battle was obstinately fought, and lasted till half-past six in the evening. The loss of the British in killed and wounded was severe, but disproportionately less than that of the French. Seven ships of the line and two frigates fell into the hands of the victors.

This battle ruined the power of the allied fleets in the West Indies, and materially contributed to the re-establishment of peace, which was concluded in January, 1783. Many other circumstances have combined to confer celebrity upon it. It restored to Britain the dominion of the ocean, after that dominion had been some time in abeyance; it proved the commencement of a long series of most brilliant victories, untarnished by any defeat on a large scale; and it was the first instance in which the manœuvre of breaking through the enemy's line, and attacking him on both sides, had been practised. The question to whom the merit of this invention, which for many years rested with Lord Rodney, is due, has of late been much canvassed before the public. It has been claimed for Mr. Clerk, of Eldin, author of a treatise on Naval Tactics, and for Sir Charles Douglas, Captain of the Fleet, who served on board the *Formidable*, and is said to have suggested it, as a sudden thought, during the action. The claim of Mr. Clerk appears now to be generally disallowed. The evidence in favour of each of the other parties is strong and conflicting; and as we have not space to discuss it, we may be excused for not expressing any opinion upon it. The claims of Sir Charles Douglas have been advanced by his son, Sir Howard Douglas, in some recent publications: the opposite side of the question has been argued in the *Quarterly Review*, No. 83. It has also been repeatedly discussed in the *United Service Magazine*. It would appear, however, at all events, that as the final judgment and responsibility rested with the Admiral, so

also should the chief honour of the measure : and it is certain that the gallant and generous officer for whom this claim has been advanced, rejected all praise which seemed to him in the least to derogate from the glory of his commanding officer.

A change of ministry had taken place in the spring ; and one of the first acts of the Whigs, on coming into office, was to recall Rodney, who had always been opposed to them in politics. The officer appointed to succeed him had but just sailed, when news of his decisive and glorious victory arrived in England. The Admiralty sent an express, to endeavour to recall their unlucky step ; but it was too late. Rodney landed at Bristol, and closed his career of service, September 21, 1782. He was received with enthusiasm, raised to the peerage by the title of Baron Rodney, and presented with an additional pension of £2000 per annum. From this time he lived chiefly in the country, and died May 23, 1792, in the seventy-fifth year of his age. He was twice married, and left a numerous family to inherit his well-earned honours and rewards.

The life of Lord Rodney, published by General Mundy, is valuable, as containing much of his official and private correspondence. The former proves that his views as a Commander-in-Chief were enlarged, judicious, and patriotic ; the latter is lively and affectionate, and shows him to have been most amiable in domestic life. Memoirs of his life and principal actions will be found in most works on naval history and biography.



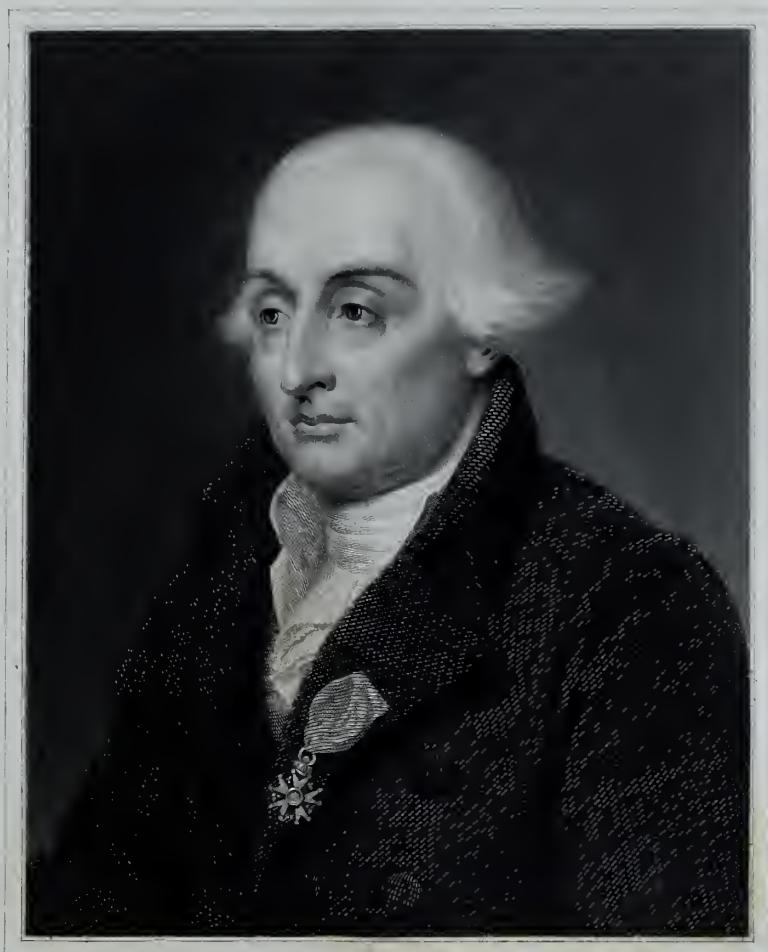
Monument of Lord Rodney in St. Paul's Cathedral.



JOSEPH LOUIS LAGRANGE was born at Turin, January 25th, 1736. His great-grandfather was a Frenchman, who entered into the service of the then Duke of Savoy ; and from this circumstance, as well as his subsequent settlement in France, and his always writing in their language, the French claim him as their countryman : an honour which the Italians are far from conceding to them.

The father of Lagrange, luckily perhaps for the fame of his son, was ruined by some unfortunate speculation. The latter used to say, that had he possessed fortune, he should probably never have turned his attention to the science in which he excelled. He was placed at the College of Turin, and applied himself diligently and with enthusiasm to classical literature, showing no taste at first for mathematics. In about a year he began to attend to the geometry of the ancients. A memoir of Halley in the Philosophical Transactions, on the superiority of modern analysis, produced consequences of which the author little dreamed. Lagrange met with it, before his views upon the subject had settled: and immediately, being then only seventeen years old, applied himself to the study of the modern mathematics. Before this change in his studies, according to Delambre\*, after it, according to others, but certainly while very young, he was elected professor at the Royal School of Artillery at Turin. We may best convey some notion of his early proficiency, by stating without detail, that at the age of twenty-three we find him—the founder of an Academy of Sciences at Turin, whose volumes yield in interest to none, and owe that interest principally to his productions,—a member of the Academy of Sciences at Berlin, an honour obtained through the medium of Euler, who shortly after announced him to Frederic of

\* Eloge de Lagrange, Mémoires de l'Institut. 1812.



Engraved by Robt Hart

## LA GRANGE.

Former Count in the Library of the  
Institute of France.

Under the superintendance of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.



Prussia as the fittest man in Europe to succeed himself,—and settling, finally, a most intricate question\* of mathematics, which had given rise to long discussions between Euler and D'Alembert, then perhaps the two first mathematicians in Europe. He had previously extended the method of Euler for the solution of what are called *isoperimetrical problems*, and laid the foundation for the *Calculus of Variations*, the most decided advance, in our opinion, which any one has made since the death of Newton.

In 1764 he gained the prize proposed by the Academy of Sciences for an *Essay on the Libration of the Moon*; and in 1766, that for an *Essay on the Theory of the Satellites of Jupiter*. In the former of these we find him, for the first time, using the *principle of virtual velocities*, which had hitherto remained almost a barren truth, but which he afterwards made, in conjunction with the principle known after the name of D'Alembert, the foundation of the whole of mechanical science.

In 1766, Euler, intending to return to St. Petersburg, resigned the situation which he held at the Court of Berlin, that of director of the physico-mathematical class of the Academy of Sciences. Frederic offered this place to D'Alembert, who refused it for himself, but joined with Euler in recommending Lagrange. The King of Prussia acceded to their suggestion, and Lagrange was invited to establish himself at Berlin, with a salary equivalent to 6,000 franes.

Lagrange remained at Berlin till after the death of Frederic. He here married a lady who was related to him, and who came from Turin at his request. She died after a lingering illness of several years, marked by the most unceasing attention on the part of her husband, who abandoned his pursuits to devote himself entirely to her during her illness. Nevertheless the period of his sojourn at Berlin is perhaps the brightest of a life, most years of which, from the age of eighteen to that of seventy, were sufficient to ensure a lasting reputation. He here laid the foundation of his Theory of Functions, of his general method for determining the secular variations of the planetary orbits; and here he wrote his *Mécanique Analytique*.

At the death of Frederic, he found that science was no longer treated with the same respect at the Court of Berlin. He had found from the commencement of his stay there, that foreigners were looked upon with dislike, and his spirits had not recovered the loss of his wife. Many advantageous offers were made to him by different courts, and among the rest by that of France. Mirabeau, who was then at

\* The admissibility of discontinuous functions into the integrals of partial differential equations.

Berlin, first pointed out to the ministers of **Louis XVI.** the acquisition which was in their power. Lagrange removed to Paris in 1787, and remained there till his death.

He was then weary of his pursuits, and it is said that his *Mécanique Analytique*, which he had sent from Berlin to be printed in Paris, lay unopened by himself for more than two years after its publication in 1788. He employed himself in the study of ecclesiastical and other history, of medicine, botany, and metaphysics. When the discoveries of the chemists changed the theory and notation of their science, or rather created a science where none existed before, he threw himself upon the new study with avidity, and declared that they had made it easy; *as easy as algebra*.

In 1792, being then fifty-six years of age, he married Mlle. Lemonnier, daughter of the astronomer of that name, and daughter, granddaughter, and niece of members of the Academy of Sciences. This lady well deserves honourable mention in every memoir of Lagrange, for the affectionate care which she took of his declining years.

When, after the subversion of the monarchy, a commission was appointed to examine into the system of weights and measures, Lagrange was placed at its head. In this post he continued, not being included in the *purification*, which three months after its formation, deprived the commission of the services of Laplace, Coulomb, Brisson, Borda, and Delambre. He took no part in politics, and appears to have given no offence to any party; hence, when the government of Robespierre commanded all foreigners to quit France, an exception was made in his favour by the committee of public safety. All his friends had advised him to retire from the country; and the fate of Lavoisier and Bailly was sufficient to show that scientific talents of the most useful character were no protection. He now regretted that he had not followed their advice, and even meditated returning to Berlin. He did not, however, put this scheme in execution; and as the Normal and Polytechnic Schools were successively founded, he was appointed to professorships in both. His *Leçons*, delivered to the former institution, appear in their published series, and among them we find the *Leçons sur la Théorie des Fonctions*, which has since appeared as a separate work.

It is almost needless to say, so well as the public know how science was encouraged under the Consulate and the Empire, that Lagrange received from Napoleon every possible respect and distinction. The titles of senator, count of the empire, grand cordon of the legion of honour, &c. were given to him. It is also gratifying to be able to add that his abstinence from political engagements has left his memory unstained by such imputations as, we know not how justly, rest upon

that of Laplace. We might have omitted to state that he belonged to all the scientific academies of Europe; but that it is necessary, for the sake of the scientific reputation of this country, to correct an inadvertence into which the able author of the 'Life of Lagrange,' in the *Biographie Universelle*, appears to have fallen. He states that Lagrange was not a member of the Royal Society of London\*. The fact is, that he was elected in 1798, and his name continued on the list of foreign members all the remainder of his life.

About the end of March, 1813, Lagrange was seized with a fever, which caused his death. He had previously been subject to fits of fainting, in the last of which he was found by Madame Lagrange, having fallen against the corner of a table. He preserved his senses to the last, and on the 8th of April conversed for more than two hours with M.M. Monge, Lacépède, and Chaptal, who were commissioned by the Emperor to carry him the grand cordon of the order of the *Réunion*. He then promised them, not thinking himself so near his end, full details of his early life. Unfortunately this promise remains unfulfilled, as he died on the 10th of April, in his seventy-eighth year. His father had died some years before him at the age of ninety-five, having had eleven children, all of whom, except the subject of this memoir, and one other, died young. Lagrange himself had no children. His private character, as all accounts agree in stating, was most exemplary. His manners were peculiarly mild, and though occasionally abstracted and absent, he was fond of society, particularly that of the young. In the earlier part of his life he was attacked in an unworthy manner by Fontaine, who at the same time boasted of some discovery which he attributed to himself. Lagrange replied with the urbanity which always accompanied his dealings with others, and while he overthrew the claim of his opponent, he repaid his incivility by the compliment of admitting that his talents were such as would have enabled him to attain the discovery, if it had not been previously made. Such moderation is rare, and as might be expected, it was accompanied by the utmost modesty in speaking of himself. In the latter half of his life, it would have been affectation in him to have denied his own powers, or spoken slightly of his own discoveries; nor do we find that he ever did so. In giving opinions or explanations, he broke off the moment he found that his ideas were not as clear or his knowledge as definite, as he had thought when he begun; concluding abruptly with *Je ne sais pas, Je ne sais pas*. Among his studies, music found a place; but, though pleased with the art, he used

\* Les principales sociétés savantes de L'Europe, celle de Londres exceptée, s'empressèrent de décorer de son nom la liste de leurs membres.

to assert that he never heard more than three bars : the fourth found him wrapped in meditation, and by his own account, he solved very difficult problems in these circumstances. He would, therefore, as M. Delambre remarks, measure the beauty of a piece of music by the mathematical suggestions which he derived from it ; and his arrangement of the great masters would be not a little curious.

He never would allow a portrait of himself to be taken. A very well executed bust, which is now in the Library of the Institute, was made from a sketch by a young Italian artist, sent by the Academy of Turin. From this bust our portrait is engraved.

Of the character of Lagrange as a philosopher, no description, in so few words, can be better than that of M. Laplace : " Among the discoverers who have most enlarged the bounds of our knowledge, Newton and Lagrange appear to me to have possessed in the highest degree that happy tact, which leads to the discovery of general principles, and which constitutes true genius for science. This tact, united with a rare degree of elegance in the manner of explaining the most abstract theories, is the characteristic of Lagrange." This power of generalization distinguishes all that he has written, and the student of the *Mécanique Analytique* is amazed when he comes to a chapter headed " Equations Différentielles pour la solution de tous les problèmes de Dynamique," which, on examination, he finds equally applicable, and equally applied, to the vibrations of a pendulum or the motion of a planet. On the exquisite symmetry of his notation and style, we need not enlarge : the mathematician either is acquainted with it, or should become so with all speed ; and others will perhaps only smile at the notion of one set of algebraical symbols possessing more elegance or beauty than another.

The separate works of Lagrange are—1. *Mécanique Analytique*, the second edition of which he was engaged upon when he died ; the first edition was published in 1788. 2. *Théorie des Fonctions Analytiques*, a system of Fluxions on purely algebraical principles ; first edition, 1797 ; second edition, 1813. 3. *Leçons sur le Calcul des Fonctions* ; first published separately in 1806. 4. *Résolution des Equations numériques* ; three editions, in 1798, 1808, and 1826. To give only a list of his separate memoirs would double the length of this life : they will be found in the *Miscellanea Taurinensis*, tom. i.—v., and 1784—5 ; *Memoirs of the Berlin Academy*, 1765—1803 ; *Recueils de l'Académie des Sciences de Paris*, 1773—4, and tom. ix. ; *Mémoires des Savans Etrangers*, tom. vii. and x. ; *Mémoires de l'Institut*, 1808—9 ; *Journal de l'Ecole Polytechnique*, tom. ii. cahiers 5, 6, tom. viii. cahier 15 ; *Seances des Ecoles Normales* ; and *Connoissance des Tems*, 1814, 1817.





Engraved by J. M. Moreau.

## VOLTAIRE

From an original Picture, by Lagrenée  
in the collection of the Institute of France

under the superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge



FRANÇOIS MARIE AROUET, who is commonly known by his assumed name, De Voltaire, was born at Châtenay, near Sceaux, February 20, 1694. He soon distinguished himself as a child of extraordinary abilities. The Abbé de Châteauneuf, his godfather, took charge of the elements of his education, and laboured successfully to improve the talents of his ready pupil without much regard to his morals. At three years old the future champion of infidelity had learned by heart the Moisade, an irreligious poem of J. B. Rousseau. These lessons were not forgotten at college, where he passed rapidly through the usual courses of study, and alarmed his Jesuit preceptors by the undisguised licence of his opinions. About this time some of his first attempts at poetry obtained for him the notice of Ninon de l'Enclos; and when the Abbé de Châteauneuf, who had been the last in her long list of favourites, introduced him at her house, she was so pleased with the promising talents of the boy, that she left him by will a legacy of 2,000 francs to purchase books. The Ecole de Droit, where Arouet next studied, was much less suited to his disposition than the College of Louis le Grand. In vain his father urged him to undertake the drudgery of a profession: the Abbé was a more agreeable monitor, and under his auspices the young man sought with eagerness the best Parisian society. At the suppers of the Prince de Conti, he became acquainted with wits and poets, acquired the easy tone of familiar politeness, and distinguished himself by the delicacy of his flatteries, and the liveliness of his repartee. In 1713 he went to Holland as page to the French ambassador, the Marquis de Châteauneuf. This place had been solicited by his father in the hope of detaching him from dissipated habits. But little was gained by the

step, for in a short time he was sent back to his family, in consequence of an intrigue with a M<sup>le</sup>. Du Noyer, whose mother, a Protestant refugee at the Hague, gained her living by scandal and libels, and on this occasion thought something might be got by complaining to the ambassador, and printing young Arouet's love-letters. He was, however, not easily discouraged. He endeavoured to interest the Jesuits in his affairs, by representing M<sup>le</sup>. Du Noyer as a ready convert, whom it would be Catholic charity to snatch from the influence of an apostate mother. This manœuvre having failed, he sought a reconciliation with his father, who remained a long while implacable; but touched at last by his son's entreaties to be permitted to see him once more, on condition of leaving the country immediately afterwards for America, he consented to receive him into favour. Arouet again attempted legal studies, but soon abandoned them in disgust. The Regency had now commenced; and among the numerous satires directed against the memory of Louis XIV., one was attributed to him. The report caused him a year's imprisonment in the Bastille. Soon afterwards he changed the name of Arouet for that of Voltaire. "I have been unhappy," he said, "so long as I bore the first: let us see if the other will bring better fortune." It seemed indeed that it did so, for in 1718 the tragedy of *OEdipe* was represented, and established the reputation of its author. It had been principally composed in the Bastille, where he also laid the foundation of his *Henriade*, which occupied the time he could spare from amorous and political intrigue, until 1724. Desiring to publish it, he submitted the poem to some select friends, men of severe taste, who met at the house of the President de Maisons. They found so many faults that the author threw the manuscript into the fire. The President Hénault rescued it with difficulty, and said, "Young man, your haste has cost me a pair of best lace ruffles: why should your poem be better than its hero, who was full of faults, yet none of us like him the worse?" Surreptitious copies spread rapidly, and gained for the author much both of celebrity and envy. But it displeased two powerful classes: the priests were apprehensive of its religious, the courtiers of its political, tendency; insomuch that the publication was prohibited by government, and the young king refused to accept the dedication. Soon after this, Voltaire was sent again to the Bastille, in consequence of a quarrel with the Chevalier de Rohan: and on his liberation, he was banished to England. There he remained three years, perhaps the most important era of his life, for it gave an entirely new direction to his lively mind. Hitherto a wit, and a writer of agreeable verse, he became in England a philosopher. Returning to France in 1726, he

brought with him an admiration of our manners, and a knowledge of our best writers, which visibly influenced his own compositions and those of his contemporaries. He now published several poetical and dramatic pieces with variable success ; but he was more than once forced to quit Paris by the clamour and persecution of his enemies. After the failure of one of his plays, Fontenelle and some other literary associates seriously advised him to abandon the drama, as less suited to his talent than the light style of fugitive poetry in which he had uniformly succeeded. He answered them by writing *Zaire*, which was acted with great applause in 1732. He had already published his history of Charles XII.: that of Peter the Great was written much later in life. The *Lettres Philosophiques*, secretly printed at Rouen, and rapidly circulating, increased his popularity, and the zeal of his enemies. This work was burnt by the common hangman. About this time commenced that celebrated intimacy with *Emilie Marquise du Châtelet*, which for nearly twenty years stimulated and guided his genius. Love made him a mathematician. In the studious leisure of Cirey, under the auspices of "la sublime Emilie," he plunged himself into the most abstract speculations, and acquired a new title to fame by publishing the *Elements of Newton* in 1738, and contending for a prize proposed by the Academy of Sciences. At the same time he produced in rapid succession *Alzire*, *Mahomet*, and *Merope*. His fame was now become European. Frederic of Prussia, Stanislaus, and other sovereigns honoured him, or were honoured by his correspondence. But the perpetual intrigues of his enemies at home deprived him of repose, and even at Cirey he was not always free from troubles and altercations. Upon the death of Madame du Châtelet, in 1749, he accepted the often urged invitation of Frederic, and took up his residence at the Court of Berlin. But the friendship of the king and the philosopher was not of long duration. A violent quarrel with the geometrician, Maupertuis, who was also living under the protection of Frederic, ended, after some ineffectual attempts at accommodation, in Voltaire's departure from Frederic's society and dominions (1753). He had just published his *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, which was shortly followed by the *Essai sur les Mœurs*. After a few more wanderings, for the versatility of his talent seemed to require a corresponding variety of abode, Voltaire finally fixed himself at Ferney, near Geneva, in the sixty-fifth year of his eventful life, and began to enjoy at leisure his vast reputation. From all parts of Europe strangers undertook pilgrimages to this philosophic shrine. Sovereigns took pride in corresponding with the Patriarch, as he was called by the numerous sect of free-thinkers, and self-styled

*philosophers*, who looked up to him as their teacher and leader. The Society of Philosophers at Paris, now employed in their great work, the Encyclopædia, which, from the moment of its ill-judged prohibition by the government had assumed the character of an antichristian manifesto, looked up to Voltaire as the acknowledged chief of their party. He furnished some of the most important articles in the work. His whole mind seemed now to be bent on one object, the subversion of the Christian religion. Innumerable miscellaneous compositions, different in form, and generally anonymous, indeed often disavowed, were marked by this pernicious tendency. “I am tired,” he is reported to have said, “of hearing it repeated that twelve men were sufficient to found Christianity: I will show the world that *one* is sufficient to destroy it!” Half a century has elapsed, and the event has not justified the truth of this boast: he mistook his own strength, as many other unbelievers have done. These impious extravagances were not, however, the only occupation of the twenty years which intervened between Voltaire’s establishment at Ferney and his death. In the defence of Sirven, Lally, Labarre, Calas, and others, who at several times were objects of unjust condemnation by the judicial tribunals, he exerted himself with a zeal as indefatigable as it was meritorious. Ferney, under his protection, grew to a considerable village, and the inhabitants learned to bless the liberalities of their patron. His mind continued to be embittered by literary quarrels, the most memorable being that with J. J. Rousseau, commemorated in his poem, entitled ‘Guerre Civile de Genève’ (1768). He hated this unfortunate exile, as a rival, as an enthusiast, and as a friend, comparatively speaking, to Christianity. Nor were these his only disquietudes. The publication of the infamous poem of La Pucelle, which he suffered in strict confidence to circulate among his intimate friends, and which was printed by the treachery of some of them, gave him much uneasiness. For its indecency and impiety he might not have cared: but all who had offended him, authors, courtiers, even the king and his mistress, were abused in it in the grossest manner, and Voltaire had no wish to provoke the arm of power. He had recourse to his usual process of disavowal, and as he could not deny the whole, he asserted that the offensive parts had been intercalated by his enemies. In other instances his zeal outran discretion, and affected his comforts by producing apprehension for his safety. Sometimes a panic terror of assassination took possession of him, and it needed all the gentleness and assiduities of his adopted daughter, Madame de Varicourt, to whom he was tenderly attached, to bring back his usual levity of mind. At length, in 1778, Voltaire yielding to the entreaties of his

favourite niece, Madame Denis, came to Paris, where at the theatre he was greeted by a numerous assemblage in a manner resembling the crowning of an Athenian dramatic poet, more than any modern exhibition of popular favour. Borne back to his hotel amidst the acclamations of thousands, the aged man said feebly, " You are suffocating me with roses." He did not indeed long survive this festival. Continued study, and the immoderate use of coffee, renewed a stranguary to which he had been subject, and he died May 30, 1778. He was interred with the rites of Christian worship, a point concerning which he had shown some solicitude, in the Abbaye de Scellières. In 1791 his remains were removed by the Revolutionists, and deposited with great pomp in the Pantheon.

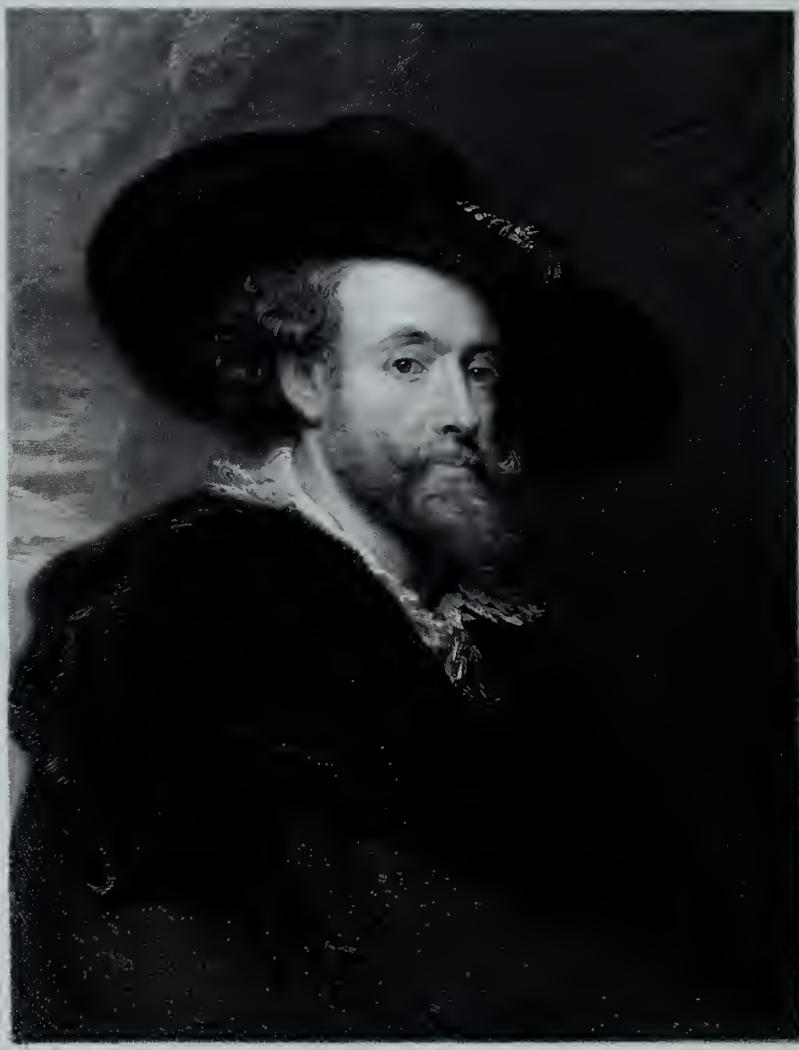
It is difficult within our contracted limits to give an accurate character of Voltaire. In versatility of powers, and in variety of knowledge, he stands unrivalled : but he might have earned a better and more lasting name, had he concentrated his talents and exertions on fewer subjects, and studied them more deeply. It has been truly and wittily observed that " he *half knew* every thing, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall; and he wrote of them all, and laughed at them all." Of the feeling of veneration, either for God or man, he seems to have been incapable. He thought too highly of himself to look up to any thing. Capricious, passionate, and generally selfish, he was yet accessible to sudden impulses of generosity. He was an acute rather than a subtle thinker. Perhaps in the whole compass of his philosophical works there is not to be found one original opinion, or entirely new argument ; but no man ever was endowed with so happy a facility for illustrating the thoughts of others, and imparting a lively clearness to the most abstruse speculations. He brought philosophy from the closet into the drawing-room. Eminently skilled to detect and satirize the faults and follies of mankind, his love of ridicule was too strong for his love of truth. He saw the ludicrous side of opinions in a moment, and often unfortunately could see nothing else. His alchymy was directed towards transmuting the imperfect metals into dross. All enthusiasm, eagerness of belief, magnifying of probabilities through the medium of excited feeling, all that makes a sect as well in its author as its followers, these things were simply foolish in his estimation. It is impossible to gather from his works any connected system of philosophy : they are full of contradictions ; but the pervading principle which gives them some form of coherence is a rancorous aversion to Christianity. As a Deist believing in a God, " *rémunérateur vengeur*," but proscribing all established worship, Voltaire occupies a middle position

between Rousseau on the one hand, who, while he avowed scepticism as to the proofs, professed reverence for the characteristics of Revealed Religion, and Diderot on the other, with his fanatical crew of Atheists, who laughed not without reason at their Patriarch of Ferney, for imagining that he, whose life had been spent in trying to unsettle the religious opinions of mankind, could fix the point at which unbelief should stop. The dramatic poems of Voltaire retain their place among the first in their language, but his other poetical works have lost much of the reputation they once enjoyed. He paints with fidelity and vividness the broad lineaments of passion, and excels in that light, allusive style, which brings no image or sentiment into strong relief, and is therefore totally unlike the analytic and picturesque mode of delineation, to which in this country, and especially in this age, we are apt to limit the name and prerogatives of imagination. As a novelist, he has seldom been equalled in wit and profligacy. As an historian, he may be considered one of the first who authorized the modern philosophizing manner, treating history rather as a reservoir of facts for the illustration of moral science, than as a department of descriptive art. He is often inaccurate, and seldom profound, but always lively and interesting. On the whole, however the general reputation of Voltaire may rise or fall with the fluctuations of public opinion, he must continue to deserve admiration as

“ The wonder of a learned age ; the line  
 Which none could pass ; the wittiest, clearest pen ;  
*The voice most echoed by consenting men ;*  
*The soul, which answered best to all well said*  
*By others, and which most requital made.” —CLEVELAND.*







## BUTTONS

the original colour by my self  
and Majesty's Collection



THE father of this great painter was a magistrate of Antwerp, who, during the desperate struggle of the Netherlands to shake off the dominion of Spain, retired from his own city to Cologne, to escape from the miseries of war. There, in the year 1577, Peter Paul Rubens was born. At an early age he gave indications of superior abilities, and his education was conducted with suitable care. The elder Rubens returned to Antwerp with his family, when that city passed again into the hands of Spain. It was the custom of that age to domesticate the sons of honourable families in the houses of the nobility, where they were instructed in all the accomplishments becoming a gentleman: and in conformity with it, young Rubens entered as a page into the service of the Countess of Lalain. The restraint and formality of this life ill suited his warm imagination and active mind: and on his father's death, he obtained permission from his mother to commence his studies as a painter under Tobias Verhaecht, by whom he was taught the principles of landscape painting, and of architecture. But Rubens wished to become an historical painter, and he entered the school of Adam Van Oort, who was then eminent in that branch of art. This man possessed great talents, but they were degraded by a brutal temper and profligate habits, and Rubens soon left him in disgust. His next master was Otho Van Veen, or Venius, an artist in almost every respect the opposite of Van Oort, distinguished by scholastic acquirements as well as professional skill, of refined manners, and amiable disposition. Rubens was always accustomed to speak of him with great respect and

affection, nor was it extraordinary that he should have conceived a cordial esteem for a man whose character bore so strong a resemblance to his own. From Venius, Rubens imbibed his fondness for allegory; which, though in many respects objectionable, certainly contributes to the magnificence of his style. In 1600, after having studied four years under this master, he visited Italy, bearing letters of recommendation from Albert, governor of the Netherlands, by whom he had already been employed, to Vincenzio Gonzaga, duke of Mantua. He was received by that prince with marked distinction, and appointed one of the gentlemen of his chamber. He remained at Mantua two years, during which time he executed several original pictures, and devoted himself attentively to the study of the works of Giulio Romano.

In passing through Venice, Rubens had been deeply impressed with the great works of art which he saw there. He had determined to revisit that city on the first opportunity, and at length obtained permission from his patron to do so. In the Venetian school his genius found its proper aliment; but it is perhaps to Paul Veronese that he is principally indebted. He looked at Titian, no doubt, with unqualified admiration; but Titian has on all occasions, a dignity and sedateness not congenial to the gay temperament of Rubens. In Paul Veronese he found all the elements of his subsequent style; gaiety, magnificence, fancy disdainful of restraint, brilliant colouring, and that masterly execution by which an almost endless variety of objects are blended into one harmonious whole. Three pictures painted for the church of the Jesuits immediately after his return to Mantua, attested how effectually he had prosecuted his studies at Venice. He then developed those powers which afterwards established his reputation, and secured to him a distinction which he still holds without a competitor, that of being the best imitator, and most formidable rival of the Venetian school.

Rome, with its exhaustless treasures of art, was still before him, and he was soon gratified with an opportunity of visiting that capital. The Duke of Mantua wished to obtain copies of some of the finest pictures there, and he engaged Rubens to make them, with the double motive of availing himself of his talents and facilitating his studies. This task was doubtless rendered light to Rubens, as well by gratitude towards his patron as by his own great facility of execution. In this respect Sir J. Reynolds considers him superior to all other painters; and says that he was “ perhaps the greatest master in the mechanical part of his art, the best workman with his tools, that ever

handled a pencil." He executed for the Duke copies of several great works, which could scarcely be distinguished from the originals. Among his own compositions, painted while at Rome, the most conspicuous are three in the church of S. Croce in Gerusalemme, two of which, Christ bearing the Cross, and the Crucifixion, are considered to rank among his finest productions. There is also, in the Campidoglio, a picture painted by him at this time, of the finding of Romulus and Remus, a work of remarkable spirit and beauty.

Rubens, however, had formed his style at Venice, and was not induced by the contemplation of the great works at Rome to alter it in any essential particular. It is not thence to be inferred that he was insensible to the wonders which surrounded him at Rome; that he did not appreciate the epic sublimity of Michael Angelo, the pure intelligence of Raphael; his admiration of ancient sculpture is attested by his written precepts. Of the antique, certainly, no trace of imitation is to be found in his works; but perhaps the bold style of design, which he had adopted in opposition to the meagre taste of his German predecessors, was confirmed by the swelling outlines of Michael Angelo. If he imitated Raphael in any thing, it was in composition; and if in that great quality of art he has any superior, it is in Raphael alone.

The opinion which the Duke of Mantua had formed of Rubens's general powers was now evinced in an extraordinary manner. Having occasion, in 1605, to send an envoy to Spain, he selected Rubens for the purpose, and directed him to return immediately from Rome to Mantua, in order to set out on his embassy. The young artist succeeded equally well as a diplomatist, and as a painter. He executed a portrait of the King, who honoured him with flattering marks of distinction, and he fully accomplished the object of his mission. Shortly after his return to Mantua he revisited Rome, where he contributed three pictures to the church of S. Maria in Vallicella. In these the imitation of Paul Veronese is particularly conspicuous. He next went to Genoa, where he executed several important works, and was regarded in that city with an interest and respect commensurate to his high reputation. In the midst of this splendid career, Rubens received intelligence that his mother, from whom he had been absent eight years, lay dangerously ill. He hastened to Antwerp, but she had expired before his arrival. The death of this affectionate parent afflicted him so severely, that he determined to quit a city fraught with painful associations, and to take up his future residence in Italy. But the Duke Albert, and the Infanta Isabella, being anxious to

retain him in their own territory, he was induced to relinquish his intention, and finally settled at Antwerp.

There he continued to practise during several years, and enriched Europe, the Low Countries especially, with a surprising number of pictures almost uniform in excellence. His style, indeed, with all its admirable qualities, was one in which the delicacies of form and expression were never allowed to stand in the way of despatch. His mode of working was to make small sketches, slightly but distinctly; these were delivered to his scholars, who executed pictures from them on a larger scale, which they carried forward almost to the final stage, at which Rubens took them up himself. Thus his own labour was given only to invention and finishing, the only parts of the art in which the painter's genius is essentially exercised. Wherever his works were dispersed, the demand for them increased, and fortune poured in on him in a golden flood. Rubens's mode of living at Antwerp was the *beau idéal* of a painter's existence. His house was embellished with such a collection of works of art, pictures, statues, busts, vases, and other objects of curiosity and elegance, as gave it the air of a princely museum. In the midst of these he pursued his labours, and it was his constant practice while painting to have read to him works of ancient or modern literature in various languages. It is a strong testimony to the variety of his powers, and the cultivation of his mind, that he was well skilled in seven different tongues. His splendid establishment comprehended a collection of wild beasts, which he kept as living models for those hunting pieces, and other representations of savage animals, which have never been surpassed. Such talents and such success could not fail of exciting envy; a cabal headed by Schut, Jansens, and Rombouts, endeavoured to detract from his reputation, and it is amusing to find him accused, among other deficiencies, of wanting invention! His great picture of the Descent from the Cross, painted for the Cathedral of Antwerp, and exhibited while the outcry against him was at its height, effectually allayed it. Snyders and Wildens were answered in a similar manner. They had insinuated that the chief credit of Rubens's landscapes and animals was due to their assistance. Rubens painted several lion and tiger hunts, and other similar works, entirely with his own hand, which he did not permit to be seen until they were completed. In these works he even surpassed his former productions; they were executed with a truth power, and energy, which excited universal astonishment, and effectually put his adversaries to silence. Rubens condescended to give no other reply to his calumniators; and he showed his own goodness of

heart, by finding employment for those among them whom he understood to be in want of it.

In 1628 he was commissioned by Mary de Medici, Queen of France, to adorn the gallery of the Luxembourg with a set of pictures, twenty-four in number, illustrative of the events of her life. Within three years he completed this magnificent series, in which allegory mingles with history, and the immense variety of actors, human and superhuman, with appropriate accompaniments, lays open a boundless field to the imagination of the artist. The largest of these pictures, which is the Coronation of Mary de Medici, combines with the gorgeous colouring proper to the subject, a correctness and chastity of design seldom attained by Rubens, and is consequently an example of that high excellence which might be expected from his style when divested of its imperfections. The gallery of the Luxembourg, as long as it possessed those ornaments, was considered one of the wonders of Europe. The pictures are now removed to the Louvre, and are seen perhaps with diminished effect, among the mass of miscellaneous works with which they are surrounded.

The two last of the Luxembourg series Rubens finished in Paris. On his return to the Netherlands his political talents were again called into requisition, and he was despatched by the Infanta Isabella to Madrid, to receive instructions preparatory to a negotiation for peace between Spain and England. Philip IV., and the Duke de Olivarez, his minister, received him with every demonstration of regard, nor did they neglect to avail themselves of his professional skill. The King engaged him to paint four pictures of large dimensions for the Convent of Carmelites, near Madrid, recently founded by Olivarez, to whom Philip presented those magnificent works. The subjects were the Triumph of the New Law, Abraham and Melchizedec, the four Evangelists, and the four Doctors of the Church, with their distinctive emblems. He also painted a series of pictures for the great Saloon of the Palace at Madrid, which represent the Rape of the Sabines, the Battle between the Romans and Sabines, the Bath of Diana, Perseus and Andromeda, the Rape of Helen, the Judgment of Paris, and the Triumph of Bacchus. The Judgment of Paris is now in the possession of Mr. Penrice, of Great Yarmouth, and may be considered one of the finest of Rubens's smaller pictures; the figures being half the size of life. The King rewarded him munificently, and conferred on him the honour of knighthood.

Rubens returned to Flanders in 1627, and had no sooner rendered an account of his mission to the Infanta, than he was sent by that

princess to England in order to sound the Government on the subject of a peace with Spain, the chief obstacle to which had been removed by the death of the Duke of Buckingham. It is probable that Rubens's extraordinary powers as an artist formed one motive for employing him in those diplomatic functions. The monarchs to whose courts he was sent were passionate admirers of art ; and the frequent visits which they made to Rubens in his painting room, and the confidence with which they honoured him, gave him opportunities, perhaps, in his double capacity, of obviating political difficulties, which might not otherwise have been so easily overcome. This was certainly the case in his negotiations with Charles I. He was not, it appears, formally presented in the character of an envoy. But the monarch received him with all the consideration due to his distinguished character ; and it was while he was engaged on the paintings at Whitehall, the progress of which the King delighted to inspect, that he disclosed the object of his visit, and produced his credentials. This he did with infinite delicacy and address ; and the King was by no means indisposed to listen to his proposals. A council was appointed to negotiate with him on the subject of a pacification, which was soon after concluded. It was on this occasion that Rubens painted and presented to the King the picture of Peace and War, which is now in our National Gallery. The relation of that work to the object of his mission is obvious : the blessings of peace in contradistinction to the miseries of war are beautifully illustrated ; and whether Rubens paid this compliment to the King while his negotiations were in progress, or after they were terminated, a more elegant and appropriate gift was never addressed by a minister to a monarch. The painter was splendidly remunerated, and honoured with knighthood by Charles in 1630. The object of his mission being happily accomplished, he returned to the Netherlands, where he was received with the distinction due to his splendid genius and successful services.

His various and incessant labours appear to have prematurely broken his constitution ; he had scarcely attained his fifty-eighth year when he was attacked by gout with more than usual severity. This painful disease was succeeded by a general debility, which obliged him to desist from the execution of large works, to relinquish all public business, and even to limit his correspondence to his particular friends, and a few distinguished artists. His letters, however, when he touches on the subject of art, rise into a strain of animated enthusiasm. He continued to work, but chiefly on small subjects, till the year

1640, when he died at the age of sixty-three. He was interred with great splendour in the church of St. James, under the altar of his private chapel, which he had ornamented with one of his finest pictures. A monument was erected to his memory by his widow and children, with an epitaph descriptive of his distinguished talents, the functions he had filled, and the honours with which he had been rewarded.

In extent of range the pencil of Rubens is unrivalled. History, portrait, landscape under the aspect of every season, animal life in every form, are equally familiar to him. His hunting pieces especially, wherein lions, tigers, and other wild animals, with men, dogs, and horses, are depicted under all the circumstances of fierce excitement, momentary action, and complicated foreshortenings, are wonderful. Rubens wanted only a purer style in designing the human figure, to have been a perfect, as well as a universal painter. His taste in this particular is singularly unlike that which the habits of his life seemed likely to produce. He had been bred up in scenes of courtly elegance, and he was acquainted with whatever was beautiful in art; yet his conception of character, especially in relation to feminine beauty, betrays a singular want of refinement. His goddesses, nymphs, and heroines are usually fat, middle-aged ladies, sometimes even old and ugly; and they always retain the peculiarities of individual models. His men too, though not without an air of portly grandeur, want mental dignity. Faults of such magnitude would have ruined the fame of almost any other painter; but while the pictures of Rubens are before us, it is hard to criticise severely their defects. If, as a colourist, he is inferior to Titian, it is, perhaps, rather in kind than in degree: Titian's colouring may be compared to the splendour of the summer sun; that of Rubens excites the exhilarating sensations of a spring morning. It is true that the artifice of his system is sometimes too apparent, whereas, in Titian, it is wholly concealed; Rubens, however, painted for a darker atmosphere, and adapted the effect of his pictures to the light in which they were likely to be seen. Inferior to Raphael in elegance and purity of composition, he competes with him in fertility and clearness of arrangement. He drew from Paul Veronese a general idea of diffused and splendid effect, but he superadded powers of pathos and expression, to which that artist was a stranger. It is, as Reynolds justly observes, only in his large works that the genius of Rubens is fully developed; in these he appears as the Homer of his art, dazzling and astonishing with poetic conception, with grandeur, and energy, and executive power.

Of Rubens's personal character we may speak in terms of high praise. He bore his great reputation without pride or presumption; he was amiable in his domestic relations, courteous and affable to all. He was the liberal encourager of merit, especially in his own art, and he repaid those among his contemporaries who aspersed him, by endeavouring to serve them. His own mind was uncontaminated by envy, for which perhaps little credit will be given him, conscious, as he must have been, of his own most extraordinary endowments. His noble admission, however, of Titian's superiority, when he copied one of his works at Madrid, attests the magnanimity of his disposition; and his almost parental kindness to his pupil, Vandyke, shows that he was equally willing to recognize the claims, and to promote the success of living genius.

Rubens's greatest works are at Antwerp, Cologne, Paris, Munich, and Madrid. The paintings at Whitehall might have formed a noble monument of his powers, but they have suffered both from neglect and reparation. There are smaller works of his in the National Gallery, the Dulwich Gallery, and in almost every private collection in this country.

The best memoir of Rubens with which we are acquainted is in *La Vie des Peintres Flamands*, par Descamps. Notices may also be found in the *Abrégé de la Vie des Peintres*, par De Piles. There is an English life in Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters*.



Entrance to Rubens' Garden, from a design by himself.





*Engraving*

## MICHELIEU.

*From a Picture  
in his Majesty's Collection.*

Under the Superintendance of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.



THE name of Du Plessis was borne by an ancient family of Poitou, which subsequently acquired by marriage the property and title of Richelieu. François Du Plessis was attached to King Henry III. while he was yet Duke of Anjou; accompanied him when he became King of Poland; and was made Grand Provost of his Court, after his accession to the throne of France. In this capacity he arrested the followers of Guise, when that duke was assassinated at Blois, in 1588.

Armand Jean Du Plessis, the future cardinal, was the third son of this dignitary, and was born on the 5th of September, 1585, at Paris, say his biographers, Aubery and Leclerc; whilst tradition claims this honour for the family château in Poitou. He received the elements of education at home, from the Prior of St. Florent; but soon quitted the paternal mansion, first for the College of Navarre, subsequently for that of Lisieux. From thence he removed to a military academy, being intended for the profession of arms. But on his brother, who was Bishop of Luçon, resolving to quit the world for the cloister, young Armand was advised to abandon the sword for the gown, in order that he might succeed to his brother's bishopric.

He adopted the advice, entered with zeal into the study of theology, and soon qualified himself to pass creditably through the exercises necessary to obtain the degree of Doctor in Theology. He already wore the insignia of his bishopric. But the Pope's sanction was still wanting, and was withheld on account of the extreme youth of the expectant. Resolved to overcome this difficulty, he set off to Rome, addressed the Pontiff in a Latin oration, and gave such proofs of talent

and acquirements above his age, that he was consecrated at Rome on the Easter of 1607, being as yet but twenty-two years of age.

This position attained, Richelieu endeavoured to make the utmost advantage of it. He acquired the good-will of his diocese by rigid attention to the affairs that fell under his jurisdiction; whilst in frequent visits to the capital, he sought to acquire reputation by preaching. In the Estates General of 1614, he was chosen deputy by his diocese, and was afterwards selected by the clergy of the states to present their *cahier* or vote of grievances to the monarch. It was an opportunity not to be thrown away by the ambition of Richelieu, who instantly put himself forward as the champion of the Queen Mother against the cabal of the high noblesse. He at the same time adroitly pointed out where she might find auxiliaries, by complaining that ecclesiastics had no longer a place in the public administration, and were thus degraded from their ancient and legitimate share of influence. Richelieu was rewarded with the place of Ahmoner to the Queen; and he was soon admitted to her confidence, as well as to that of her favourite the Maréchal D'Ancre.

In 1616 he was appointed Secretary of State; but aware by what slender tenure the office was held, he refused to give up his bishopric. This excited not only the animadversions of the public, but the anger of the favourite. Richelieu offered to give up his secretaryship, but the Queen could not dispense with his talents. The assassination of the favourite, however, soon overthrew the influence of the Queen herself. Still Richelieu remained attached to her, and followed her to Blois: but the triumphant party dreading his talents for intrigue, ordered him to quit the Queen, and repair to one of his priories in Anjou. He was subsequently commanded to retire to his bishopric, and at last exiled to Avignon. Here he sought to avert suspicion by affecting to devote himself once more to theological pursuits. During this period he published one or two polemical tracts, the mediocrity of which proves either that his genius lay not in this path, or, as is probable, that his interest and thoughts were elsewhere.

The escape of the Queen Mother from her place of confinement, excited the fears of her enemies, and the hopes of Richelieu. He wrote instantly to Court, to proffer his services towards bringing about an accommodation. In the difficulty of the moment, the King and his favourite accepted the offer. Richelieu was released from exile, and allowed to join the Queen at Angoulême, where he laboured certainly to bring about a reconciliation. This was not, however, such as the Court could have wished. De Luynes, the favourite, accused the Bishop

of Luçon of betraying him. The Queen sought to regain her ancient authority; the Court wished to quiet and content her without this sacrifice; and both parties, accordingly, after seeming and nominal agreements, fell off again from each other. De Luynes sought a support in the family of Condé; whilst Mary de Medici, refusing to repair to Paris, and keeping in her towns of surety on the Loire, flattered the Huguenots, and endeavoured to bind them to her party. On this occasion Richelieu became intimately acquainted with the designs and intrigues and spirit of the Reformers.

The division betwixt the King and his mother still continued. The discontented nobles joined the latter, and flew to arms. This state of things did not please Richelieu, since defeat ruined his party, and success brought honour rather to those who fought than to him. He therefore exerted himself, first to keep away the chief of the nobility from the Queen, secondly, to bring about an accommodation. The difficulties were got over by the defeat of the Queen's forces owing to surprise, and by the promotion of Richelieu to the rank of Cardinal. The malevolent coupled the two circumstances together; and even the impartial must descry a singular coincidence. The event, at least, proves his address; for when the agreement was finally concluded, it was found that Richelieu, the negotiator, had himself reaped all the benefits. He received the cardinal's hat from the King's hand at Lyons, towards the close of the year 1622.

Not content with this advancement of her counsellor, Mary de Medici continued to press the King to admit Richelieu to his cabinet. Louis long resisted her solicitations, such was his instinctive dread of the man destined to rule him. Nor was it until 1624, after the lapse of sixteen months, and when embarrassed with difficult state questions, which no one then in office was capable of managing, that the royal will was declared admitting Richelieu to the council. Even this grace was accompanied by the drawback, that the Cardinal was allowed to give merely his opinion, not his vote.

Once, however, seated at the council table, the colleagues of the Cardinal shrunk before him into ciphers. The marriage of the Princess Henrietta with the Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles I., was then in agitation. Richelieu undertook to conduct it, and overcame the delays of etiquette and the repugnance of Rome. De Vieville, the King's favourite and minister, venturing to show jealousy of Richelieu, was speedily removed. The affair of the Valteline had given rise to endless negotiations. The matter in dispute was the attempt of the House of Austria to procure a passage across the Grisons to connect

their Italian and German dominions. France and the Italian powers had opposed this by protests. Richelieu boldly marched an army, and avowed in council his determination to adopt the policy and resume the scheme of Henry IV., for the humiliation of the House of Austria. The King and his Council were terrified at such a gigantic proposal: instead of being awed by the genius of Richelieu, as yet they mistrusted it. Peace was concluded with Spain; on no unfavourable conditions indeed, but not on such as flattered the new minister's pride.

Whilst these negotiations with Spain were yet in progress, the Huguenots menaced a renewal of the civil war. Richelieu advised in the council that their demands should be granted, urging that whilst a foreign foe was in the field, domestic enemies were better quieted than irritated. His enemies took advantage of this, and represented the Cardinal as a favourer of heresy. This charge is continually brought against those who are indifferent to religious dissensions; but it is probable that Richelieu did seek at this time to gain the support of the Protestant party, attacked as he was by a strong band of malcontent nobles, envious of his rise, and intolerant of his authority.

The whole Court, indeed, became leagued against the superiority and arrogance of the Minister; the most *qualified* of the noblesse, to use Aubery's expression, joined with the Duke of Orleans, the monarch's brother, and with the Queen, to overthrow Richelieu. As the Maréchal D'Ancre had been made away with by assassination, so the same means were again meditated. The Comte de Chalais offered himself as the instrument: but the mingled good fortune and address of Richelieu enabled him to discover the plot, and avoid this, and every future peril.

His anchor of safety was in the confidence reposed in him by Louis XIII. This prince, although of most feeble will, was not without the just pride of a monarch; he could not but perceive that his former ministers or favourites were but the instruments or slaves of the noblesse, who consulted but their own interests, and provided but for the difficulties of the moment. Richelieu, on the contrary, though eager for power, sought it as an instrument to great ends, to the consolidation of the monarchy, and to its ascendancy in Europe. He was in the habit of unfolding these high views to Louis, who, though himself incapable of putting them into effect, nevertheless had the spirit to admire and approve them. Richelieu proposed to render his reign illustrious abroad, and at home to convert the chief of a turbulent

aristocracy into a real monarch. It forms indeed the noblest part of this great statesman's character, that he won upon the royal mind, not by vulgar flattery, but by exciting within it a love of glory and of greatness, to which, at the same time, he pointed the way.

Accordingly, through all the plots formed against him, Louis XIII. remained firmly attached to Richelieu, sacrificing to this minister's preeminence his nobility, his brother Gaston, Duke of Orleans, his Queen, and finally the Queen Mother herself, when she too became jealous of the man whom she had raised. As yet however Mary de Medici was his friend, and Richelieu succeeded in sending his enemies to prison or to the scaffold. Gaston was obliged to bow the knee before the Cardinal. And Anne of Austria, who was accused of having consented to espouse Gaston in case of the King's death, was for ever exiled from the affections of the monarch, and from any influence over him. If this latter triumph over the young wife of Louis, whose enmity certainly the Cardinal had most to fear, was excited by coldly invented falsehoods, history has scarcely recorded a more odious crime.

It is said that Richelieu himself was enamoured of Anne of Austria, and that he found himself outrivalled by the Duke of Buckingham. What credit should be assigned to the existence and influence of such feelings it is difficult to determine. But certainly a strong and personal jealousy of Buckingham is to be perceived in the conduct of Richelieu. Policy would have recommended the minister to cajole rather than affront the English favourite at a time when the Huguenot party was menacing and the nobility still indignant. The Cardinal had not long before concluded the marriage of the Princess Henrietta with Charles, in order to secure the English alliance, and thus deprive the Huguenots of a dangerous support. Now he ran counter to these prudent measures, defied Buckingham, whom he forbade to visit Paris, and thus united against himself and against the monarchy, two most powerful enemies, one foreign, one domestic.

If Richelieu thus imprudently indulged his passion or his pique, he redeemed the error by activity and exertion unusual to the age. He at once formed the project of attacking the Huguenots in their chief strong-hold of La Rochelle. Buckingham could not fail to attempt the relief of this sea-port; and the Cardinal anticipated the triumph of personally defeating a rival. He accordingly himself proceeded to preside over the operation of the siege. To render the blockade effectual, it was requisite to stop up the port. The military officers whom he employed could suggest no means of doing this. Richelieu took

counsel of his classic reading ; and having learned from Quintus Curtius how Alexander the Great reduced Tyre, by carrying out a mole against it through the sea, he was encouraged to undertake a similar work. The great mound was accordingly commenced, and well-nigh finished, when a storm arose and destroyed it in a single night. But Richelieu was only rendered more obstinate : he recommenced the mole, and was seen with the volume of Alexander's History in his hand, encouraging the workmen and overruling the objections of the tacticians of the army. The second attempt succeeded, the harbour was blocked up, and the promised aid of England rendered fruitless. The Cardinal triumphed, for La Rochelle surrendered. In his treatment of the vanquished, Richelieu showed a moderation seldom observable in his conduct. He was lenient, and even tolerant towards the Huguenots, content with having humbled the pride of his rival, Buckingham.

La Rochelle was no sooner taken, and Richelieu rewarded by the title of Prime Minister, than he resumed those projects of humbling the House of Austria, in which he had previously been interrupted. A quarrel about the succession to Mantua afforded him a pretext to interfere ; and he did so, after his fashion, not by mere negotiations, but by an army. This expedition proved a source of quarrel between him and the Queen Mother, Mary de Medici, who hitherto had been his firm and efficient friend. Private and family reasons rendered Mary everse to the war. Both the French Queens of the House of Medici had shown the reverence of their family for the princes of the blood of Austria. Mary, on her accession to the regency, had interrupted Henry IV.'s plans for humbling the influence of that house. Richelieu's endeavour to revive this scheme called forth her opposition. He was obstinate from high motives ; she from petty ones. But she could not forgive the ingratitude of him whom she had fostered, and who now dared to thwart and counteract her. The voice of the conqueror of La Rochelle triumphed in council, and his project in the field. The French were victorious in Italy, and the minister equally so over the mind of the monarch.

But Mary de Medici could not forgive ; and she now openly showed her hatred of Richelieu, and exerted herself to the utmost to injure him with the King. Though daily defeating her intrigues, the Cardinal dreaded her perseverance, and resolved to drag the King with him to another Italian campaign. Louis obeyed, and the court set out for the south, the Queen Mother herself accompanying it. Richelieu, however, did not tarry for the slow motions of the monarch. He flew

to the army, took upon him the command, and displayed all the abilities of a great general in out-maneuvring and worsting the generals and armies of Savoy. In the mean time Louis fell dangerously ill at Lyons. His mother, an affectionate attendant on his sick couch, resumed her former empire over him. At one moment his imminent death seemed to threaten the Cardinal with ruin. Louis recovered, however; and his first act was to compel a reconciliation, in form at least, between the Cardinal and the Queen Mother.

The King's illness, although not so immediately fatal to Richelieu as his enemies had hoped, was still attended with serious consequences to him. The French army had met with ill success through the treachery of the general, Marillac, who was secretly attached to the Queen's party: and the failure was attributed to Richelieu.

Mary de Medici renewed her solicitations to her son, that he would dismiss his minister. Louis, it appears, made a promise to that effect; a reluctant promise, given to get rid of her importunity. Mary calculated too securely upon his keeping it; she broke forth in bitter contumely against Richelieu; deprived him of his superintendence over her household; and treated Madame de Combalet, the Cardinal's niece, who had sunk on her knees to entreat her to moderate her anger, almost with insult. The King was present, and seemed to sanction her violence; so that Richelieu withdrew to make his preparations for exile. Louis, dissatisfied and irresolute, retired to Versailles; whilst Mary remained triumphant at the Luxembourg, receiving the congratulations of her party. Richelieu in the mean time, ere taking his departure, repaired to Versailles, and, once there, resumed the ascendant over the monarch. The tidings of this was a thunder-stroke to Mary and her party, who became instantly the victims of the Cardinal's revenge. Marillac was beheaded; and Mary de Medici, herself at length completely vanquished by her rival, was driven out of France to spend the rest of her days in exile.

Richelieu had thus triumphed over every interest and every personage that was, or was likely to be, inimical to his sway. The young Queen, Anne of Austria, and the Queen Mother, Mary de Medici, had alike been sacrificed to his preeminence; and it appears that he employed the same means to ruin both. One of the weak points of Louis XIII. was jealousy of his brother, Gaston, Duke of Orleans, whom he could never abide. Notwithstanding his sloth, the King assumed the direction of the Italian army, and went through the campaign, to prevent Gaston from earning honour, by filling the place of command. Richelieu made effectual use of this foible; he overcame Anne of

Austria, by bringing proofs that she preferred Gaston to the King; and he overcame Mary de Medici by a similar story, that she favoured Gaston, and was paving the way for his succession.

The Duke of Orléans was now indignant at his mother's exile, and espoused her interest with heat. He intruded upon Richelieu, menacing him personally; nor did the latter refrain from returning both menace and insult. Gaston fled to Lorraine, and formed a league with its duke, and with the majority of the French noblesse, for the purpose of avenging the wrongs of his mother, and driving from authority the upstart and tyrannical minister.

The trial of Marillac had roused the spirit and indignation even of those nobles, who had previously respected and bowed to the minister of the royal choice. This nobleman and maréchal was seized at the head of his army, and conveyed, not to a prison, but to Richelieu's own country-house at Ruel. Instead of being tried by his Peers or in Parliament, he was here brought before a Commission of Judges, chosen by his enemy. He was tried in the Cardinal's own hall, condemned, and executed in the Place de Grève.

The iniquity of such a proceeding offered a popular pretext for the nobility to withstand the Cardinal: and they were not without other reasons. Richelieu not only threatened their order with the scaffold, but his measures of administration were directed to deprive them of their ancient privileges, and means of wealth and domination. One of these was the right of governors of provinces to raise the revenue within their jurisdiction, and to employ or divert no small portion of it to their use. Richelieu to remedy this transferred the office of collecting the revenue to new officers, called the *Elect*. He tried this in Languedoc, then governed by the Duc de Montmorenci, a noble of the first rank, whose example consequently would have weight, and who had always proved himself obedient and loyal. Moved, however, by his private wrongs, as well as that of his order, he now joined the party of the Duke of Orléans. That weak prince, after forming his alliance with the Duke of Lorraine, had raised an army. Richelieu lost not a moment in despatching a force which reduced Lorraine, and humbled its hitherto independent duke almost to the rank of a subject. Gaston then marched his army to Languedoc, and joined Montmorenci. The Maréchal de Brezé, Richelieu's brother-in-law, led the royal troops against them, defeated Gaston at Castelnau-dari, and took Montmorenci prisoner. This noble had been the friend and supporter of Richelieu, who even called him his son; yet the Cardinal's cruel policy determined that he should die. There was difficulty in

proving before the Judges that he had actually borne arms against the King.

"The smoke and dust," said St. Reuil, the witness, "rendered it impossible to recognize any combatant distinctly. But when I saw one advance alone, and cut his way through five ranks of gens-d'armes, I knew that it must be Montmorenci."

This gallant descendant of five Constables of France perished on the scaffold at Toulouse. Richelieu deemed the example necessary, to strike terror into the nobility. And he immediately took advantage of that terror, by removing all the governors of provinces, and replacing them throughout with officers personally attached to his interests.

Having thus made, as it were, a clear stage for the fulfilment of his great political schemes, Richelieu turned his exertions to his original plan of humbling the House of Austria, and extending the territories of France at its expense. He formed an alliance with the great Gustavus Adolphus, who then victoriously supported the course of religious liberty in Germany. Richelieu drew more advantage from the death than from the victories of his ally; since, as the price of his renewing his alliance with the Swedes, he acquired the possession of Philipsburg, and opened the way towards completing that darling project of France and every French statesman, the acquisition of the Rhine as a frontier.

The French having manifested their design to get possession of Treves, the Spaniards anticipated them; and open war ensued betwixt the two monarchies. The Cardinal allied with the Dutch, and drew up a treaty "to free the Low Countries from the cruel servitude in which they are held by the Spaniards." In order to effect this, the French and Dutch were to capture the fortresses of the country, and finally divide it between them.

But Richelieu's views or means were not mature enough to produce a successful plan of conquest. Surrounded as France was by the dominions of her rival, she was obliged to divide her forces, attack on many sides, and make conquests on none. The generals, whom he was obliged to employ, were remarkable but for servility to him, and jealousy of each other. The Cardinal de la Valette headed one of his armies, but with no better success than his lay colleagues. Instead of crushing Spain, Richelieu endured the mortification of witnessing the irruption of her troops into the centre of the kingdom, where they took Corbie, and menaced the very capital.

This was a critical moment for Richelieu, who is said to have lost

courage amidst these reverses, and to have been roused to confidence by the exhortations of his Capuchin friend and confidant, Father Joseph. He was obliged on this occasion to relax his severity and pride, to own that the generals of his choice were little worthy of their trust, and to call on the old noblesse and the princes of the blood to lead the French troops to the defence of the country. Both obeyed the summons, and exerted themselves to prove their worth by the recapture of Corbie, and the repulse of the Spaniards. The enemies of the Cardinal were aware how much the ignominy of these reverses, as the result of his mighty plans, must have abated the King's confidence in him. They endeavoured to take advantage of the moment, and Louis seemed not averse to shake off his minister. There was no trusting the King's intentions, however, and it was agreed to assassinate Richelieu at Amiens. The Comte de Soissons had his hand on his sword for the purpose, awaiting but the signal from Gaston ; but the latter wanted resolution to give it, and Richelieu again escaped the murderous designs of his foes.

The character of Louis XIII. left his courtiers without hope. It was such a general mass of weakness, as to offer no particular weak point of which they could take advantage. Too cold to be enamoured of either wife or mistress, his gallantries offered no means of captivating his favour ; nor was he bigot enough to be ruled through his conscience by priestly confessors. It is singular that the gallant, peremptory, and able Louis XIV. was governed and influenced by those means which had no hold upon his weak sire. Still as these were the received ways for undermining the influence of a dominant minister, Louis XIII. was assailed through his supposed mistresses, and through his confessors, to induce him to shake off Richelieu. But all attempts were vain. The ladies Hauteville and Lafayette, who had pleased Louis, retired to a convent. His confessors, who had hinted the impiety of supporting the Dutch and German Protestants, were turned out of the palace. And the Queen, Anne of Austria, with whom Louis made a late reconciliation, the fruit of which was the birth of the future Louis XIV., was exposed to disrespect and insult. Her apartments and papers were searched by order of the Cardinal, a letter was torn from her bosom, she was confined to her room, and menaced with being sent back to Spain.

Richelieu in his wars was one of those scientific combatants who seek to weary out an enemy, and who husband their strength in order not to crush at once, but to ruin in the end. Such at least were the tactics by which he came triumphant out of the struggle with Spain.

He made no conquests at first, gained no striking victories; but he compensated for his apparent want of success by perseverance, by taking advantage of defeat to improve the army, and by labouring to transfer to the crown the financial and other resources which had been previously absorbed by the aristocracy. Thus the war, though little brilliant at first, produced at last these very important results. Arras in the north, Turin in the south, Alsace in the east, fell into the hands of the French; Rousillon was annexed to the monarchy; and Catalonia revolted from Spain. Richelieu might boast that he had achieved the great purposes of Henry IV., not so gloriously indeed as that heroic prince might have done, but no less effectually. This was effected not so much by arms as by administration. The foundation was laid for that martial preeminence which Louis XIV. long enjoyed; and which he might have retained, had the virtue of moderation been known to him.

It was not without incurring great personal perils, with proportionate address and good fortune, that Cardinal Richelieu arrived at such great results. The rebellion of the Comte de Soissons, the same whose project of assassination had failed, menaced the Minister seriously. In a battle against the royal army, the Count was completely victorious, an event that might have caused a revolution in the government, had not fortune neutralized it by his death. He fell by a pistol-shot, whilst contemplating the scene of victory. His friends asserted that he was murdered by an emissary of the Cardinal: according to others, the bullet was accidentally discharged from his own pistol.

But the most remarkable plot which assailed Richelieu, was that of Cinq-Mars, a young nobleman selected to be the King's favourite, on account of his presumed frivolity. But he was capable of deep thoughts and passions; and wearied by the solitude in which the monarch lived, and to which he was reduced by the Minister's monopoly of all power, he dared to plot the Cardinal's overthrow. This bold attempt was sanctioned by the King himself, who at intervals complained of the yoke put upon him.

Great interests were at stake, for Richelieu, reckoning upon the monarch's weak health, meditated procuring the regency for himself. Anne of Austria, aware of this intention, approved of the project of Cinq-Mars, which of course implied the assassination of the Cardinal. No other mode of defying his power and talent could have been contemplated. But Richelieu was on the watch. The Court was then in the south of France, engaged in the conquest of Roussillon, a situation favourable for the relation of the conspirators with Spain. The

Minister surprised one of the emissaries, had the fortune to seize a treaty concluded between them and the enemies of France; and with this flagrant proof of their treason, he repaired to Louis, and forced from him an order for their arrest. It was tantamount to their condemnation. Cinq-Mars and his friends perished on the scaffold; Anne of Austria was again humbled; and every enemy of the Cardinal shrunk in awe and submission before his ascendancy. Amongst them was the King himself, whom Richelieu looked upon as an equal in dignity, an inferior in mind and in power. The guards of the Cardinal were numerous as the Monarch's, and independent of any authority save that of their immediate master. A treaty was even drawn up between king and minister, as between two potentates. But the power and the pride of Richelieu reached at once their height and their termination. A mortal illness seized him in the latter days of 1642, a few months after the execution of Cinq-Mars. No remorse for his cruelty or abatement of his pride marked his last moments. He summoned the monarch like a servant to his couch, instructed him what policy to follow, and appointed the minister who was to be his own successor. Even in the last religious duties, the same character and the same spirit were observable. As his cardinal's robe was a covering and excuse for all crimes in life, he seemed to think that it exempted him from the common lot of mortals after death.

Such was the career of this supereminent statesman, who, although in the position of Damocles all his life, with the sword of the assassin suspended over his head, surrounded with enemies, and with insecure and treacherous support even from the monarch whom he served, still not only maintained his own station, but possessed time and zeal to frame and execute gigantic projects for the advancement of his country and of his age. It makes no small part of Henry IV.'s glory that he conceived a plan for diminishing the power of the House of Austria. Richelieu, without either the security or the advantages of the king and the warrior, achieved it. Not only this, but he dared to enter upon the war at the very same time when he was humbling that aristocracy which had hitherto composed the martial force of the country.

The effects of his domestic policy were indeed more durable than those of what he most prided himself upon, his foreign policy. The latter was his end, the former his means; but the means were the more important of the two. For half a century previous, kings had been acquiring a sacro-sanctity, a power founded on respect, which equalled that of Asiatic despots; whilst at the same time their real sources of power remained in the hands of the aristocracy. From this

contradiction, this want of harmony betwixt the theoretic and the real power of monarchs, proceeded a state of licence liable at all times to produce the most serious convulsions. To this state of things Richelieu put an end for ever. He crushed the power of the great nobility, as Henry VII., by very different means, had done before him in England. He made Louis a sovereign in the most absolute sense ; he reformed and changed the whole system of administration, destroyed all local authorities, and centralized them, as the term is, in the capital and the court. We see, accordingly, that it was only the capital which could oppose Mazarin ; all provincial force was destroyed by Richelieu. He it was, in fact, who founded the French monarchy, such as it existed until near the end of the eighteenth century, a grand, indeed, rather than a happy result. He was a man of penetrating and commanding intellect, who visibly influenced the fortunes of Europe to an extent which few princes or ministers have equalled. Unscrupulous in his purposes, he was no less so in the means by which he effected them. But so long as men are honoured, not for their moral excellences, but for the great things which they have done for themselves, or their country, the name of Richelieu will be recollected with respect, as that of one of the most successful statesmen that ever lived.

His measures with respect to commerce were very remarkable. He proposed to render the French marine as formidable as the French armies, and chose the wisest means in favouring colonization and commercial companies for the purpose. The chief part of their successful settlements in the east and west the French owe to Richelieu. In financial measures he showed least sagacity, and the disordered state in which he left this branch of the administration was the principal cause of the difficulties of his successor.

As a patron of letters, Richelieu has acquired a reputation almost rivalling that of his statesmanship. His first and earliest success in life had been as a scholar supporting his theses ; and, as it is continually observed that great men form very erroneous judgments of their own excellences, he ever prided himself especially in his powers as a penman : it was a complete mistake on his part. He has left a considerable quantity of theological tracts of trifling merit.

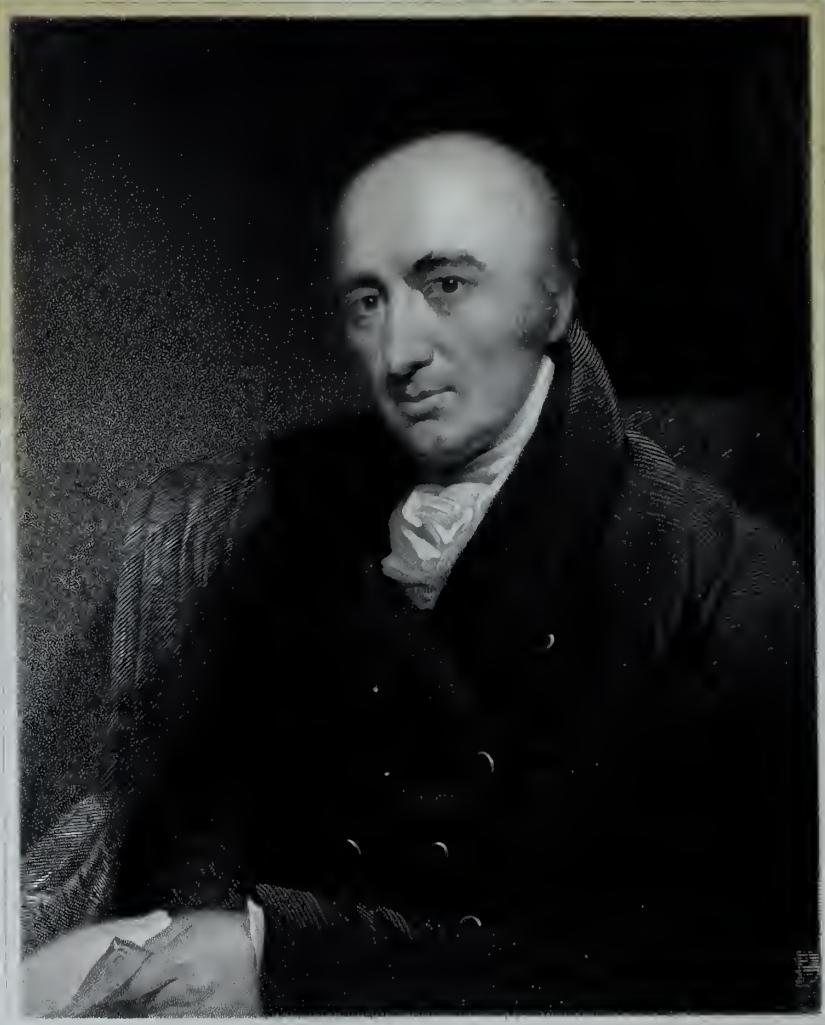
Not content with his own sphere of greatness, he aspired to the minor praise of being skilled in the fashionable literature of the day ; and amused himself by composing dramatic pieces, some of which Corneille was employed to correct. The independence of the poet, and the pride of the patron, led to a quarrel of which we have given some account in the life of the great tragedian. In 1635 Richelieu founded the French

Academy. We should expect to find in his political writings traces of the master-hand of one, who, with a mind of unusual power, had long studied the subject of which he wrote. But those which are ascribed to him, for none, we believe are avowed, or absolutely known to be his, are of unequal merit. The ‘Mémoires de la Mère, et du Fils,’ are mediocre, and unworthy of him. The ‘Testament Politique du Cardinal de Richelieu’ (the authenticity of which is strongly contested by Voltaire) bears a much higher reputation as a work upon Government. La Bruyere has said of it, that the man who had done such things ought never to have written, or to have written in the style in which it is written.

There are several English lives of Cardinal Richelieu, most of them published in the seventeenth century, but none which we know to be of authority. In French, we may recommend the reader to the life of Aubery. ‘The best account of Richelieu, however, is said to be contained in the ‘Histoire de Louis XIII.’ by P. Griffet.







Engraved by W. Holl

J H WOLLASTON

From the original Engraving by G. Jackson  
in the possession of the Royal Society

under the Superintendance of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge



No record of this eminent philosopher has yet appeared, except his scientific papers, and a few meagre biographical sketches published shortly after his death. It is to be hoped that some one duly qualified for the task will become the historian of his life and labours before it is too late.

William Hyde Wollaston was born August 6, 1766. His grandfather was well known as the author of a work, entitled 'The Religion of Nature Delineated.' He completed his education at Caius College, Cambridge. It has been said, in most of the memoirs of him, that he obtained the honour of being senior wrangler. This is a mistake, arising from Francis Wollaston, of Sidney, having gained the first place in 1783. It appears from the *Cantabrigienses Graduati* that he did not graduate in Arts; but, with a view to practising medicine, proceeded to the degrees of M.B. in 1787, and M.D. in 1793. He was not unversed, however, in mathematical studies. He first established himself as a physician at Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk; but meeting with little encouragement, removed to London. Soon after this change of abode, he became a candidate for the office of physician to St. George's Hospital, in opposition to Dr. Pemberton. The latter was elected, and Wollaston, in a fit of pique, declared that he would abandon the profession, and never more write a prescription, were it for his own father.

He kept to his resolution, hasty and unwise as it may seem; and from this time forward devoted himself solely to the cultivation of science. Even in an economical view he had no cause to regret this, for he acquired wealth by the exercise of his inventive genius. One single discovery, that of a method by which platinum can be made ductile and malleable, is said to have produced him about thirty thousand

pounds. It has been objected that he derogated from the dignity of the philosophic character by too keen an eye towards making his experiments profitable : but in this field, if in any, the labourer is surely worthy of his reward ; and unless it can be shown that he turned away from any train of discovery, because it did not promise pecuniary gain, surely not a shadow of blame can be attached to him for profiting by the legitimate earnings of his industry and talents. That he was fond of acquiring money, there is good reason to believe ; but there is a story, which has been before told, and which we have ourselves some reason to consider authentic, which proves that he could use nobly that which he had gained frugally. A gentleman, in embarrassed circumstances, requested his interference to procure some place under government. He replied, “ I have lived to sixty without asking a single favour from men in office, and it is not, after that age, that I shall be induced to do it, were it even to serve a brother. If the enclosed can be of any use to you, in your present difficulties, pray accept it ; for it is much at your service.” The enclosure was a cheque for ten thousand pounds.

One of Wollaston’s peculiarities was an exceeding jealousy of any person entering his laboratory. “ Do you see that furnace ? ” he once said to a friend, who had penetrated unbidden to this sacred ground. “ Yes.” “ Then make a profound bow to it, for this is the first, and will be the last time of your seeing it.” It is not a necessary inference, that this dislike to having his processes observed arose from jealousy either of his fame or his profit : it may have been merely the result of a somewhat saturnine and reserved temper, which seems to have shunned unnecessary publicity on all occasions.

Wollaston was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1793. He was appointed one of its Secretaries, November 6, 1806. His first paper, which is on medical subjects, is published in the Philosophical Transactions for 1797 ; and, until his death, he continued to be a frequent contributor. His papers amount in number to thirty-nine, and must be well examined before a just idea can be formed of the extent and variety of his scientific knowledge. They embrace various subjects connected with Pathology, Optics, Electricity, Chemistry, Crystallography, and mechanical contrivances of various sorts. He contributed a few papers to other philosophical works. Of the Geological Society he was an active member, though he sent no memoirs to its Transactions ; and on the first annual meeting of that body after his death, the president, Dr. Fitton, bore testimony to the high value of his services to the science of Geology.

The lives of Wollaston and Davy began and ended nearly at the same time, and ran parallel to each other ; they never crossed. Each was original, and independent of the other ; their minds were unlike, their processes different, and the discoveries of one never interfered with those of the other. “The chemical manipulations of Wollaston and Davy,” we quote from Dr. Paris, “offered a singular contrast to each other, and might be considered as highly characteristic of the temperaments and intellectual qualities of these remarkable men. Every process of the former was regulated with the most scrupulous regard to microscopic accuracy, and conducted with the utmost neatness of detail. It has been already stated with what turbulence and apparent confusion the experiments of the latter were conducted ; and yet each was equally excellent in his own style ; and as artists, they have not unaptly been compared to Teniers and Michael Angelo. By long discipline, Wollaston acquired such power in commanding and fixing his attention upon minute objects, that he was able to recognize resemblances, and to distinguish differences, between precipitates produced by re-agents, which were invisible to ordinary observers, and which enabled him to submit to analysis the smallest particle of matter with success. Davy on the other hand obtained his results by an intellectual process, which may be said to have consisted in the extreme rapidity with which he seized upon, and applied, appropriate means at appropriate moments.

“To this faculty of minute observation, which Dr. Wollaston applied with so much advantage, the chemical world is indebted for the introduction of more simple methods of experimenting : for the substitution of a few glass tubes and plates of glass for capacious retorts and receivers, and for the art of making grains give the results which previously required pounds. A foreign philosopher once called on Dr. Wollaston with letters of introduction, and expressed an anxious desire to see his laboratory. ‘Certainly,’ he replied ; and immediately produced a small tray containing some glass tubes, a blow-pipe, two or three watch-glasses, a slip of platinum, and a few test bottles.” We may conclude, however, that this was not the whole of Wollaston’s apparatus, nor he in this quite ingenuous ; and the anecdote forms another illustration of his dislike to admitting any one into his work-room.

To this ingenious turn of mind and love of minute accuracy we owe several valuable instruments. Of these the most important is his reflective Goniometer, or angle-measurer, which by calling in the unerring laws of optics, enables the observer to ascertain within a small limit of

error, the angle contained between two faces of a crystal, and introduced, in the words of Dr. Fitton, "into crystallography a certainty and precision, which the most skilful observers were before unable to attain." Another of his contrivances is the sliding Scale of chemical equivalents, an instrument highly useful to the practical chemist. We also owe to him the Camera Lucida, which enables persons unacquainted with drawing, to take accurate sketches of any objects presented to their view. An amusing and characteristic anecdote of his fondness for producing great results by small means, is told by Dr. Paris. Shortly after he had witnessed Davy's brilliant experiments with the galvanic battery, he met a brother chemist in the street, and taking him aside, pulled a tailor's thimble and a small phial out of his pocket, and poured the contents of the one into the other. The thimble was a small galvanic battery, with which he instantly heated a platinum wire to a white heat.

We have already spoken of the profits which he derived from the manufacture of platinum. This intractable metal, most valuable in the arts from its extreme difficulty of fusion, and power of resisting almost all agents, was rendered by these very qualities almost incapable of being reduced into that malleable form, in which alone it would be made extensively useful. His method of working it is detailed at length in his last Bakerian Lecture, published in the Philosophical Transactions for 1829, and must be read before a person unacquainted with metallurgy can imagine how tedious and laborious were the processes by which he succeeded in bringing platinum to bear the hammer. By an ingenious contrivance, described in the Transactions of 1813, he drew platinum into wire  $\frac{1}{5000}$  of an inch in diameter, highly valuable for the construction of telescopes; and even reduced some portions to the inconceivable tenuity of  $\frac{1}{30,000}$ . Several of his papers are devoted to the consideration of platinum, and of the two new metals, palladium and rhodium, which, in the course of his inquiries, he discovered in small quantities in the ores of platinum. These also he succeeded in rendering malleable. Rhodium is remarkable for its hardness, which has caused it to be used to point the nibs of metallic pens.

During the autumn of 1828 Dr. Wollaston suffered from an affection of the brain, of which he died, December 22, 1828, retaining his faculties to the last. During the period of his illness, feeling that his life was precarious, he devoted himself to communicating, by dictation, his various discoveries and improvements to the world. Five papers by him were read during the last session of the Royal Society during that year, in one of which he alludes affectingly to his illness, as obliging

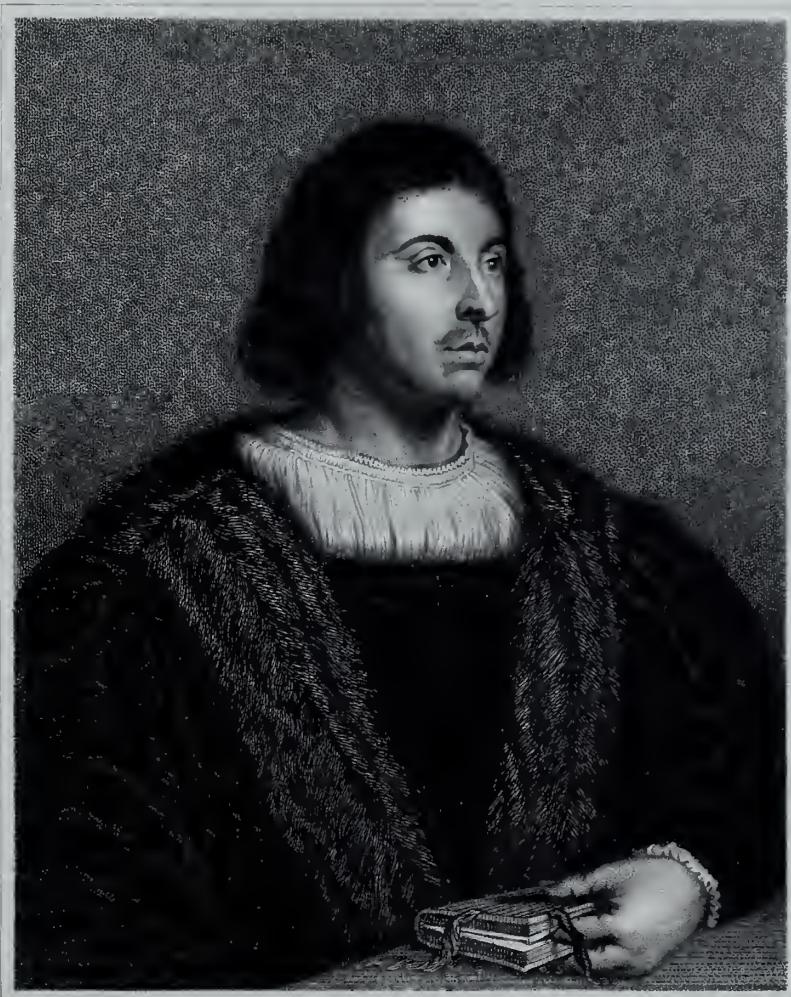
him to commit his observations to writing more hastily than he was wont. Another is the Bakerian Lecture on the manufacture of platinum, already mentioned.

Previous to his death he invested 1000*l.* stock in the name of the Royal Society, the interest of which he directed to be employed for the encouragement of experiments in Natural Philosophy. He was never married, and was Senior Fellow of Caius at his death. He was privately buried at Chiselhurst in Kent; of which parish his father had been rector.

Dr. Wollaston's philosophical character is thus described in the preface to a late edition of Dr. Henry's 'Elements of Experimental Chemistry':—“Dr. Wollaston was endowed with bodily senses of extraordinary acuteness and accuracy, and with great vigour of understanding. Trained in the discipline of the exact sciences, he had acquired a powerful command over his attention, and had habituated himself to the most rigid correctness both of thought and language. He was sufficiently provided with the resources of the mathematics, to be enabled to pursue with success profound inquiries in mechanical and optical philosophy, the results of which enabled him to unfold the causes of phenomena not before understood, and to enrich the arts connected with those sciences by the invention of ingenious and valuable instruments. In chemistry he was distinguished by the extreme nicety and delicacy of his observations; by the quickness and precision with which he marked resemblances and discriminated differences; the sagacity with which he devised experiments and anticipated their results; and the skill with which he executed the analysis of fragments of new substances, often so minute as to be scarcely perceptible by ordinary eyes. He was remarkable, too, for the caution with which he advanced from facts to general conclusions: a caution which, if it sometimes prevented him from reaching at once to the most sublime truths, yet rendered every step of his ascent a secure station from which it was easy to rise to higher and more enlarged inductions. Thus these illustrious men, Wollaston and Davy, though differing essentially in their natural powers and acquired habits, and moving independently of each other, in different paths, contributed to accomplish the same great ends, the evolving new elements; the combining matter into new forms; the increase of human happiness by the improvement of the arts of civilized life; and the establishment of general laws that will serve to guide other philosophers onwards through vast and unexplored regions of scientific discovery.”



THE family of this celebrated writer, who claims a distinguished place among the founders of Italian literature, came from the village of Certaldo, in the valley of the Elsa, about twenty miles south-west of Florence. His father, Boccaccio di Chellino, was a Florentine merchant, who, in his visits to Paris, became acquainted with a Frenchwoman, of whom Giovanni Boccaccio, the subject of this memoir, was born, A. D. 1313. It is uncertain whether Paris or Florence was the place of his nativity. He commenced his studies at Florence, under Giovanni da Strada, a celebrated grammarian; but was apprenticed by his father, when hardly ten years old, to another merchant, with whom he spent six years in Paris. Attached to literature, he felt a strong distaste to his mercantile life. He manifested the same temper after his return to Florence; upon which his father sent him to Naples, partly upon business, partly because he thought that mingling in the pleasures of that gay city might neutralize his son's distaste to the laborious profession in which he was engaged. Robert of Anjou, the reigning king of Naples, encouraged learning, and his court was the most polished of the age: and during an abode of eight years in that capital, Boccaccio became acquainted with most of the learned men of Italy, especially Petrarch, with whom he contracted a friendship, broken only by death. There also he fell in love with a lady of rank, whose real name he has concealed under that of Fiametta. Three persons have been mentioned as the object of his passion: the celebrated Joanna of Naples, grand-daughter of Robert; Mary, the sister of Joanna; and another Mary, the illegitimate daughter



*Engraved by W. Hopwood.*

## B O C C A C C I O .

*From a Print by Daniels Van Dolen.*

Under the Superintendance of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge



of Robert, who seems to have the best claim to this distinction. It was at Naples, that Boccaccio, inspired by a visit to Virgil's tomb, conceived his first longings after literary fame. He determined to give up commerce, and devote himself entirely to study; and his father consented to this change, but only on condition that he should apply himself to the canon law. This was a new source of annoyance. For several years he pored over "dry decisions and barren commentaries," as he expresses himself; until he obtained his doctor's degree, and was left at liberty to follow his own pursuits.

After remaining some time at Florence he returned to Naples; where he employed himself in writing prose and verse, the Decameron and the Teseide. His father died in 1349: and having turned his inheritance into money, he travelled to Sicily, Venice, and other parts of Italy, collecting manuscripts, frequenting universities and libraries, studying Greek under Leontius Pilatus of Thessalonica, astronomy under Andalone del Negro, and Roman literature and antiquities. Manuscripts at this time were very costly; and he soon exhausted his patrimony in these pursuits. He then applied himself to transcribing works; and, by dint of expense and labour, collected a considerable library, which he bequeathed to the Augustine friars of Santo Spirito, at Florence. But his means were inadequate to gratify his liberal tastes: and at times he found himself in very straitened circumstances. It is said that he sometimes availed himself of his skill as a copyist, to eke out his resources. In Petrarch he found a generous friend and a wise counsellor.

Boccaccio enjoyed a high reputation among his countrymen for learning and ability; and he was several times employed by them on embassies and affairs of state. But of all his missions, the most pleasing was that of repairing to Padua, to communicate to Petrarch the solemn revocation of the sentence of exile passed on his father during the factions of 1302; and to inform him that the Florentines, proud of such a countryman, had redeemed his paternal property, and earnestly invited him to dwell in his own land, and confer honour on its then rising university. Though much affected by this honourable reparation, Petrarch did not at the time comply with their request.

About 1361, a singular circumstance wrought a total change in Boccaccio's feelings and mode of life. A Carthusian monk came to him one day, and stated that father Petroni of Sienna, a monk of the same order, who had died not long before in the odour of sanctity, had commissioned him to exhort Boccaccio to forsake his studies, reform his loose life, and prepare for death. To prove the truth of his

mission, he revealed several secrets, known only to Boccaccio and Petrarch, to both of whom both the monks were totally unknown. Terrified at this mysterious communication, Boccaccio wrote to Petrarch, expressing his resolution to comply with the advice, and shut himself up in a Carthusian cloister. Petrarch's answer, which may be found among his Latin epistles, is full of sound sense. He tells his friend, that though this disclosure of secrets, supposed to be unknown to any living soul, appeared a mystery, yet "there is such a thing as artifice in imposture which may at times assume the language of supernatural inspiration; that those who practise arts of this kind examine attentively the age, the aspect, the looks, the habits of the man they mean to delude, his theories, his motions, his voice, his conversation, his feelings, and opinions: and from all these derive their oracles." He adds, that as to the prediction of approaching death, there was no occasion for a message from the next world to say, that a man past the middle age, and infirm of body, could not expect to have many years to live: and, in conclusion, advises his friend to tranquillize his imagination, and to avail himself of the warning towards leading a more regular life; retaining at the same time his liberty, his house, and his library, and making a good use even of the heathen authors in the latter, as many holy men, and the fathers of the church themselves, had done before him. This letter restored Boccaccio to reason. He gave up his intention of retiring from the world, and contented himself with assuming the ecclesiastical dress; and being admitted to the first gradation of holy orders, he adopted a regular and studious course of life, and turned his attention to the study of the Scriptures.

About the following year he again visited Naples, but he was disgusted by the neglect which he experienced; and, in 1363, he went to Venice, and abode three months with Petrarch. He was sent twice, in 1365 and 1367, to Pope Urban V. upon affairs of the republic. In 1373, the Florentines determined to appoint a lecturer to explain the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, much of which was even then obscure or unintelligible without the aid of a comment. Boccaccio was chosen for this honourable office, with the annual stipend of one hundred florins. He had long and deeply studied, and knew by heart almost the whole of that sublime poem, which he had several times transcribed. He left his written comment on the *Inferno*, and also a life of Dante, both of which have been published among his works. But illness interrupted his lectures, and induced him to resort again to his favourite country residence at Certaldo. A disorder of the

stomach, aggravated by intense application, terminated his existence, Dec. 21, 1375, at the age of sixty-two. He was buried in the parish church of Certaldo, and the following modest inscription, which he had himself composed, was placed over his tomb :—

“ Hac sub mole jacent cineres ac ossa Johannis.  
Mens sedet ante Deum, meritis ornata laborum  
Mortalis vitæ. Genitor Boccaccius illi,  
Patria Certaldum, studium fuit alma poesis.”

A monument was also raised to him in the same church, with an inscription by Coluccio Salutati, secretary to the republic, an intimate friend of the deceased. This monument was restored, in 1503, by Tedaldo, Podestà, or justice, of Certaldo, who placed another inscription under the bust of the deceased. The republic of Florence, in 1396, voted monuments to be raised in their capital to Boccaccio, Dante, and Petrarch, but this resolution was not carried into effect.

By a will, which was dated the year preceding that of his death, and which is published among his Latin works, Boccaccio constituted his two nephews, the sons of his brother Jacopo, his heirs. His library he left to his confessor, Father Martin of Signa, an Augustin friar, whom he also appointed his executor, directing, that after the father's death it should revert to the convent of Santo Spirito at Florence, for the use of students. A fire which broke out in the convent, in the year 1471, destroyed this valuable collection, which had cost the proprietor so many years of labour and care, and in which he had expended the greater part of his patrimony. Boccaccio having, in his book *De Genealogia Deorum*, quoted several ancient authors whose works have not reached us, it is supposed that some of these must have been included in the catastrophe that befel his library. He has been accused, however, of quoting fictitious authors in this treatise.

Boccaccio's private character was stained by licentiousness. Besides his Fiammetta, he had several mistresses whom he mentions in his Ameto. A natural daughter, whose name was Violante, he lost while she was an infant, and he mourns over her in his eclogues under the name of Olympia. He had also an illegitimate son who survived him, but who is not mentioned in his testament.

In the latter years of his life, Boccaccio was poor, though not in absolute want, and his friend Petrarch, who died little more than one year before him, left him by his will fifty golden florins, “ to buy him a winter pelisse to protect him from cold while in his study at night,” adding, that if he did no more for Boccaccio, it was not

through want of inclination but want of means. Boccaccio, on his part, had given Petrarch several works copied by his own hand, among others, a Latin translation of Homer, Dante, and some works of St. Augustine.

His modest dwelling at Certaldo, in which he died, still remains. The Princes of the House of Medici protected it by affixing their armorial ensigns on the outside, with an inscription. A Florentine lady, of the name of Medici Lenzoni, purchased it in 1822, in order to preserve it from dilapidation as a relic of departed genius. The appearance of the house is exactly similar to the sketch given by Manni a century since, in his life of Boccaccio. It is built of brick, according to the fashion of the fourteenth century, with a square turret on one side of it commanding a fine view of the surrounding hills; one of which is still called by the country people, "the hill of Boccaccio," from a tradition that this was his favourite place of resort for meditation and study in the summer heats. The grove which crowned its summit was cut down not long ago. A curious circumstance is said by Professor Rosellini to have happened some years before the purchase of the house by the Signora Lenzoni. An old woman, who tenanted the premises, was busy weaving in a small room next to the sitting apartment, when the repeated shaking of her loom brought down part of the wall, and laid open a small recess hollowed in the thickness of it, from which a large bundle of written papers tumbled down. The old woman, through ignorance or superstition, or both, thought it a pious duty to consign the whole of the MSS. to the flames. Probably many interesting autographs of Boccaccio have thus been lost.

Much has been said about Boccaccio's tomb being "torn up and desecrated by bigots;" and Lord Byron has made this the subject of his eloquent invective. The story seems, however, to have originated in mistake. Rosellini has given an authentic account of the whole transaction. It appears that many years since, after a law had been passed by the Grand Duke Leopold in 1783, forbidding the burial of the dead under church pavements, the tomb of Boccaccio, which lay in the centre of the church of St. James and St. Michael at Certaldo, covered by a stone bearing his family escutcheon, his effigy, and the four lines above quoted, was opened. Nothing was found, except a skull, and a tin tube containing several written parchments, which the persons present could not understand. What became of these is not known, perhaps they were destroyed like the MSS. found by the old woman. The tombstone was purchased by some one on the spot,

and having since been broken, one fragment alone remains, which the Signora Lenzoni has recovered and placed inside Boccaccio's house. All this is asserted in a notarial document drawn up at Certaldo in 1825, and certified by ocular witnesses then surviving, who were present at the opening of the vault. But, besides this gravestone, there was a monument placed high on one of the side-walls of the church, consisting of Boccaccio's bust, which is a good likeness, holding with both his arms against his breast a book, on which is written 'Decameron,' and under the bust are the two inscriptions by Salutati and Tedaldo, such as Manni transcribed them. To this monument, and not to the tomb, Byron's reproach partly applies, for it was of late years removed by some fanatics from its place, and thrown in a corner at the end of the church. But the authorities interfered and caused it to be restored in a more conspicuous position, facing the pulpit, where it is now to be seen.

Boccaccio wrote both in Latin and in Italian, in prose and in verse. His Latin works are now mostly forgotten, although the author evidently thought more of them than of his Italian novels. Petrarch fell into the same mistake with regard to his own productions in both languages. The language of the country, especially in prose composition, was then esteemed below the dignity of learned men, and suited only to works of recreation and amusement. Boccaccio wrote a book on mythology (*De Genealogia Deorum*, lib. xv.) which he dedicated to Hugo, King of Cyprus and Jerusalem, at whose request he had composed it. He acknowledges that he had derived much information on the subject from Pietro Perugino, librarian to King Robert of Naples, an assiduous inquirer after ancient and especially Greek lore, and who had availed himself in his researches of his intimacy with the Monk Barlaam, a learned Greek emigrant, residing in Calabria. Boccaccio's other Latin works are 'De montium, sylvarum, lacuum, fluviorum, stagnorum, et marium nominibus, liber,' a sort of gazetteer. 'De casibus virorum et faeminarum illustrium, libri ix.' where he eloquently relates, in the last book, the tragic catastrophe of the unfortunate Templars who were executed at Paris in 1310-14; at which his father was present. 'De claris mulieribus opus,'—and lastly, sixteen 'Eclogæ,' amounting to about three thousand lines, which have been published with those of Petrarch and others at Florence in 1504. Boccaccio left a key to the real personages of these eclogues in a long letter written to the already-mentioned father Martin of Signa. Both he and Petrarch allude in these poems to the vices and corruptions of the Papal Court.

Of Boccaccio's Italian works, the Decameron is that by which his memory has been immortalized. This book consists of a series of tales, one hundred in number, ten of which are told on each afternoon for ten successive days, by a society of seven young women and three young men, who having fled from the dangers of the plague which afflicted Florence in 1348, assembled at a villa a short distance from the town. The stories turn chiefly on amorous intrigues and devices, disappointments and enjoyments, very broadly narrated ; and can by no means be recommended for indiscriminate perusal. They are admirably told, and are full of wit and humour ; but the pleasantries are for the most part of a nature which modern manners cannot tolerate. There are, however, better things than mere loose tales in the Decameron : several of the stories are unexceptionable; some highly pathetic. They have furnished many subjects for poetry, and especially for the drama ; as, for instance, the tale of Ginevra, the ninth of the second day, and the affecting story of Griselda, the last of all. With regard to the merit of the invention, it is true that some of Boccaccio's tales are taken from the 'Cento Novelle Antiche,' one of the oldest books in the Italian language. But the greater number are original : and many refer to persons and events well known in Italy, especially in Tuscany at that time, as is demonstrated by Manni. The skill with which this multitude of tales is arranged and brought forward, constitutes one of the chief merits of the work. It has been remarked that out of a hundred introductions with which he prefaces them, no two are alike. His narrative is clear ; free from metaphors and repetition ; avoiding superfluity as well as monotony, and engaging without tiring the attention. His descriptions, though minute, are graceful and lively. Generally humorous, not to say broad, he can, at pleasure, be pathetic ; at pleasure, grave and dignified.

Here our praise of this celebrated work must stop. Of its indecencies we have already spoken. The narrative, though clothed in decent words, frequently runs in such a strain as no company of women above the lowest grade of shame would now listen to, much less indulge in. Bad as this is, a still deeper stain is to be found in the utter absence of all moral principle, and callousness to all good feeling. Long planned seduction, breach of hospitality, betrayal of friendship, all these are painted as fortunate and spirited adventures, and as desirable objects of attainment. Unlucky husbands are sneered at ; jealousy of honour is censured as stupidity or tyranny. Some of the female characters are even worse than the male ; and the world of the Decameron is one which no man of common decency or honour

could bear to live in. Boccaccio saw the mischief he had done, and was sorry when it was too late. In a letter to Mainardo de' Cavalcanti, Marshal of Sicily, he entreated him not to suffer the females of his family to read the Decameron ; because, “ although education and honour would keep them above temptation, yet their minds could not but be tainted by such obscene stories.”

He is fond of introducing monks and friars engaged in licentious pursuits, and exposed to ludicrous and humiliating adventures. He also at times speaks of the rites of the church in a profane or sarcastic manner. From this it has been inferred that he was a sceptic or heretic. The conclusion is erroneous. Like other wits of that ignorant, superstitious, and debauched age, Boccaccio sneered, reviled, and yet feared : and while he ridiculed the ministers and usages of the church, he was employed in collecting relics, and ended his loose tales with invocations of heaven and the saints. Besides, the secular clergy themselves bore no love towards the monks and mendicant friars : they were jealous of the former, and they hated and despised the latter. From Dante down to Leo X. the dignitaries of the church spoke of friars in terms nearly as opprobrious as Boccaccio himself. Leo made public jest of them. Bembo, the secretary of Leo, and a cardinal himself, and Berni, the secretary to several cardinals, give no more quarter to them than is given in the Decameron. No wonder then that laymen should take similar liberties, and that a friar should be regarded, as Ugo Foscolo observes, as a sort of scape-goat for the sins of the whole clergy. These considerations may explain how the Decameron went through several editions, both at Venice and Florence, without attracting the censures of the Court of Rome. The earliest editions bear the dates of 1471-2, but these became extremely scarce, since the fanatic Savanarola had a heap of them burnt in the public square of Florence in 1497. Of the Valdarfer edition of 1471, only one copy is known to exist. This has long been an object of interest to book collectors ; and was purchased, at the Roxburgh sale, by the Marquis of Blandford, for the enormous sum of £2260. After the reformation in Germany, a more watchful censorship was established, and the Decameron was placed in the list of proscribed books. An expurgated edition however was allowed to appear, under the *imprimatur* of Pope Gregory XIII. in 1573, in which many passages marked by the Inquisition were expunged, and laymen were made to take the places of the clergy in the more indecorous adventures. The MS. from which this and most of the subsequent editions are taken, was written by Mannelli, the godson, and friend of Boccaccio, in 1384, nine years

after the author's death. It is now in the Laurentian library at Florence. Mannelli has copied scrupulously what he calls "the text," whether an autograph of Boccaccio, or an earlier copy, even to its errors and omissions, noting from time to time in the margin "sic textus," or "deficiebat," or "superfluum." It may therefore be presumed that the author had not put the last finish to his work.

Boccaccio began the Decameron soon after the plague of 1348, and seems to have circulated the days, or parts, among his friends as he completed them. He was a long time in completing the work, which he seems to have laid aside, and resumed at leisure; and it is believed that he was eight years employed upon it, and that he wrote the latter tales about 1356. From that time he seems to have taken no more notice of it. He never sent it to Petrarch, to whom he was in the habit of transmitting all his other compositions; and it was only by accident, many years after, that the poet saw a copy of it. This he mentions in one of his letters to Boccaccio, and says that he "supposes it to be one of his juvenile productions." Petrarch praised only the description of the plague, and the story of Griselda. This he translated into Latin.

Boccaccio's other Italian prose works are 'Il Filocopo,' a prose romance, written at the request of his Fiammetta. It is a dull composition, far inferior to the Decameron in style, and displaying an anomalous mixture of Christian and Pagan images and sentiments. 'L'Amorosa Fiammetta' is also a prose romance, in which the lady relates her passion and grief for the absence of Pamfilo, by which name the author is supposed to have designated himself. 'Il Corbaccio,' or the 'Labyrinth of Love,' in which he relates his adventures with a certain widow, the same probably as he has introduced in the seventh tale of the eighth day of the Decameron. 'Ameto,' a drama of mixed prose and verse. 'Origine, vita, e costumi di Dante Alighieri,' the life of Dante already mentioned. Several letters remain, but the bulk of his correspondence is lost. A life of Petrarch by Boccaccio, written originally in Latin, has been recently discovered, and published in 1828 by Domenico Rossetti, of Trieste.

Boccaccio wrote a quantity of Italian verse, of which he himself thought little, after seeing those of Petrarch; and posterity has confirmed his judgment. His Teseide, a heroic poem, in ottava rima, may be excepted. This metre, generally adopted by the Italian epic and romantic poets, he has the merit of having invented. Though imperfect, and little attractive as an epic poem, the Teseide is not destitute of minor beauties. Chaucer is indebted to it for his

Knight's Tale, remodelled by Dryden under the name of Palamon and Arcite.

An edition of Boccaccio's Italian prose works was printed at Naples, with the date of Florence, in 1723-4, in 6 vols. 8vo.; but a better edition has been lately published at Florence, corrected after the best approved MSS. in 13 vols 8vo. 1827-32.

The editions of the Decameron are almost innumerable. The best and most recent ones are those of Poggiali, 1789-90, in 5 vols. 8vo.; that of Ferrario, Milan, 1803; that of Colombo, Parma, 1812; all with copious notes and comments; a small one by Molini, Florence, 1820; and the one by Pickering, London, to which the late Ugo Foscolo prefixed an elaborate and interesting historical dissertation. Domenico Maria Manni wrote a 'History of the Decameron,' Florence, 1742, in which he has collected a store of curious information concerning that work and its author.

The principal biographers of Boccaccio are Filippo Villani, who may be considered as a contemporary of our author; Giannozzo Mannetti, Francesco Sansovino, Giuseppe Betussi, Count Mazzuchelli, and lastly, the Count G. Battista Baldelli, who published a new life of Boccaccio in 1806 at Florence.



[Scene from the Introduction to the Decameron, after a design by Stothard.]



**CLAUDE GELÉE**, commonly called Claude Lorraine, was born in 1600, at the village of Chamagne in Lorraine, of very indigent parents. He was apprenticed to a pastry-cook; but at the end of his term of service, whether from disgust at his employment, desire of change, or perhaps influenced by the love of art, he engaged himself as a domestic to some young painters who were going to Italy. On arriving at Rome he was employed as a colour-grinder by Agostino Tassi, an artist then in high repute whose landscapes are spirited and free, and particularly distinguished by the taste displayed in the architectural accompaniments. Tassi first induced him to try his abilities in painting. His earliest essays were implicit imitations of his master's manner, and evinced no symptom of original genius; perhaps even in his matured style some indications of Tassi's influence may be traced. He continued, as opportunity occurred, to exercise his pencil, obtaining little notice and still less reward. By degrees however he succeeded sufficiently to venture on giving up his menial employment; and having acquired from Tassi a tolerable expertness in the mechanical part of his profession, he appears from thenceforth to have given little attention to the works of other painters, relying on his own discernment and diligent observation of nature. Many years elapsed, however, before the talents of Claude reached their full maturity, whence his biographers have inferred that he owed his excellence rather to industry than genius: as if such excellence were within the reach of mere application.

He drew with indefatigable diligence, both from antique sculpture and from the living model, but to little purpose; and he was so



Engraved by W. H. Worrell

## CLAUDE

*From the original  
on the Music Royal, Paris.*

Under the Superintendance of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge

London Published by Charles Knight, Eastgate Street,



conscious of his incapacity, that he used to observe, “ I sell the landscapes, and throw the figures into the bargain :” and sometimes he employed Filippo Lauri and Courtois to insert them. But his figures, however faulty in themselves, are always well adapted to promote the harmony of the whole composition ; being judiciously placed, and shaded, illuminated, sharpened out, or rendered indistinct, with nearly as much skill as is shown in the other parts of the picture. And not unfrequently, however feebly drawn, they partake of that classical and poetic air, which Claude, beyond every other landscape painter, has diffused over his works.

It is said, and the circumstances of his early life render it probable, that he was very deficient in general acquirements. Assuredly he had no opportunities of becoming a profound scholar, nor in relation to his art was it necessary that he should; why should he have sought through the medium of books that imagery which lay before him in reality? Rome, and its environs, the banks of the Tiber, and the broad Campagna, supplied his imagination with the best food, and his pencil with inexhaustible materials. He was accustomed to spend whole days in the open air, not only studying Nature in her permanent aspects, but making memorandums of every accidental and fleeting effect which presented itself to his observation. Sandrart, who sometimes accompanied Claude in his excursions, relates that he was accustomed to discourse on the visible phenomena of nature with the intelligence of a philosopher ; not only noting effects, but explaining their causes with precision and correctness, whether produced by reflection or refraction of light, by dew, vapour, or other agencies of the atmosphere. Broad as is his style, he entered minutely into detail, and made drawings of trees, shrubs, and herbage, marking all their peculiarities of shape, growth, and foliage. By this practice he was enabled to represent those objects with undeviating accuracy, and to express, by a few decided touches, their general character.

Amidst the splendour of his general effects, the distinguishing qualities of objects are never neglected ; fidelity is never merged in manner ; and hence it is, that the longer we look at his pictures, the more vivid is the illusion, the more strongly is the reality of the represented scene impressed upon us. Combining with his fine imagination the results of observation thus long and intensely exercised, he accomplished in his works that union of poetic feeling with accurate representation of nature, which forms the highest excellence of art, and in which, as a landscape painter, he stands unrivalled.

Claude found in Rome and its neighbourhood the materials of his

scenery, but the combination of them was his own: he selected and copied portions, but he seldom or never painted individual views from nature. His favourite effects are those of sunrise and sunset, the periods at which nature puts on her most gorgeous colouring. Beauty and magnificence are the characteristics of his compositions: he seldom aims at sublimity, but he never sinks into dulness. Above all he never brings mean or offensive objects into prominent view, as is so often the case in the Dutch pictures. His fore-grounds are usually occupied by trees of large size and noble character, and temples and palaces, or with ruins august in their decay. Groves and towers, broad lakes, and the continuous lines of arched aqueducts enrich the middle space; or a boundless expanse of Arcadian scenery sweeps away into the blue mountainous horizon. In his admirable pictures of seaports, he carries us back into antiquity; there is nothing in the style of the buildings, the shape of the vessels, or the character of any of the accompaniments which, by suggesting homely associations, injures the general grandeur of the effect. The gilded galleys, the lofty quays, and the buildings which they support, all belong to other times, and all have the stamp of opulence, magnificence, and power.

As Claude's subjects are almost uniformly those of morning or evening, it might naturally be supposed that his works possess an air of sameness. To remove such an impression, it is only necessary to look at his pictures side by side. We then perceive that he scarcely ever repeats himself. The pictures of St. Ursula and the Queen of Sheba, in the National Gallery, are striking instances of that endless variety which he could communicate to similar subjects. In each of these pictures there is a procession of females issuing from a palace, and an embarkation. The extremities of the canvas are occupied by buildings, the middle space being assigned to the sea and shipping, over which the sun is ascending. After the first glance, there is no resemblance in these pictures. The objects introduced in each are essentially different in character; in that of the Queen of Sheba they are much fewer in number; the masses are more broad and unbroken, and the picture has altogether more grandeur and simplicity than its companion. Its atmosphere too is different: it is less clear and golden, and there is a swell on the waves, as if they were subsiding from the agitation of a recent storm. The picture of St. Ursula is characterized by beauty. Summer appears to be in its meridian, and the whole picture seems gladdened by the freshening influence of morning. The vapoury haze which is just dispersing, the long cool shadows thrown by the buildings and shipping, the

glancing of the sun-beams on the water, and the admirable perspective, all exhibit the highest perfection of art. It was thus that Claude, although he painted only the most beautiful appearances of nature, diversified his effects by the finest discrimination. Sea-ports such as these were among his most favourite subjects; and there are none in which he more excelled: yet perhaps it is with his pastoral subjects that we are most completely gratified. The Arcadia of the poets seems to be renewed in the pictures of Claude.

In the general character of his genius, Claude bears a strong affinity to Titian. He resembles him in power of generalization, in unaffected breadth of light and shadow, and in that unostentatious execution which is never needlessly displayed to excite wonder, and which does its exact office, and nothing more. But the similitude in colour is still more striking. The pictures of both are pervaded by the same glowing warmth; and exhibit the true brilliancy of nature, in which the hues of the brightest objects are graduated and softened by the atmosphere which surrounds them. The colours by which both produced their wonderful effects were for the most part simple earths, without any mixture of factitious compounds, the use of which has been always prevalent in the infancy, and the decline of art, administering as it does to that unformed or degenerate taste which prefers gaudiness to truth.

Claude's success raised a host of imitators. He was accustomed, on sending home the works which he had been commissioned to paint to make a drawing of each, which he inscribed with the name of the purchaser, as a means by which the originality of his productions might be traced and authenticated. He left six volumes of these drawings at the time of his death, which he called his *Libri di Verità*. One containing two hundred designs is in possession of the Duke of Devonshire; these have been engraved by Earlam, and published by Boydell under the title of *Liber Veritatis*. Another of these books was purchased a few years since in Spain, and brought into this country; where it came into the possession of Mr. Payne Knight, and was bequeathed by him to the British Museum. Some of Claude's pictures have been finely engraved by Woollet. There are twenty-eight etchings extant of landscapes and sea-ports, by Claude's own hand, executed with the taste, spirit, and feeling which we should naturally expect.

England is rich in the pictures of Claude, some of the finest of which were imported from the Altieri Palace at Rome, and from the collection of the Duc de Bouillon at Paris. There are ten in the

National Gallery : the two to which we have adverted, that of St. Ursula especially, he has perhaps never surpassed. The little picture of the Death of Procris is also singularly beautiful. The Earl of Radnor's Evening, or Decline of the Roman Empire, is one of the most exquisite of Claude's works. The Marquis of Bute's collection at Luton, is also enriched by some of the finest specimens of this artist in England.

His private history is entirely devoid of incident. From the time of his arrival in Italy he never quitted it: and though claimed by the French as a French artist, he was really, in all but birth, an Italian. He lived absorbed in his art, and never married, that his devotion to it might not be interrupted by domestic cares. His disposition was mild and amiable. He died in 1682, aged eighty-two.

For more detailed information we may refer to Sandrart 'Academie Artis Pictoriae.' It is extraordinary that in Felibien's elaborate work, "sur les Vies et sur les Ouvrages des plus excellens Peintres anciens et modernes," Claude is entirely omitted. The English reader will find the substance of the information given by Sandrart, in Bryan and Pilkington.



[From a Picture by Claude.]





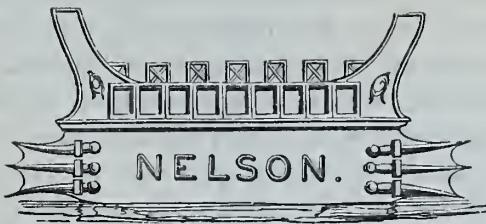
J. W. C.

## LORD NELSON

From original Edition by Sippow  
in the Navyty Collection of Prints

Published by the Order of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

Edited by Charles Knight, with M. H. K.



THE services of our great naval Captain need no long description. The recollection of them is still fondly cherished by his countrymen, and they have been worthily commemorated by Mr. Southey, with whose Life of Nelson few readers are unacquainted. To that most animated and interesting work, which by its late re-publication in the Family Library is placed within the reach of every one, we must refer those who desire fuller information concerning the hero of the Nile, Copenhagen, and Trafalgar, than is contained in this memoir.

Horatio Nelson was born at Burnham Thorpe, in Norfolk, September 29, 1758. His father, the rector of that parish, was burthened with a numerous family: and it is said to have been more with a view to lighten that burden than from predilection for the service, that at the age of twelve he expressed a wish to go to sea, under the care of his uncle, Captain Suckling. Of his early adventures it is unnecessary to speak in detail. In 1773 he served in Captain Phipps's voyage of discovery in the Northern Polar seas. His next station was the East Indies; from which, at the end of eighteen months, he was compelled to return by a very severe and dangerous illness. In April, 1777, he passed his examination, and was immediately commissioned as second lieutenant of the Lowestoffe frigate, then fitting out for Jamaica.

Fortunate in conciliating the good-will and esteem of those with whom he served, he passed rapidly through the lower ranks of his profession, and was made post-captain, with the command of the Hinchinbrook, of twenty-eight guns, June 11, 1779, when not yet of age. In 1782 he was appointed to the Albemarle, twenty-eight; and in 1784 to the Boreas, twenty-eight, in which he served for three years in the West Indies, and though in time of peace, gave signal proof of his resolution and strict sense of duty, by being the first to insist on

the exclusion of the Americans from direct trade with our colonies, agreeably to the terms of the Navigation Act. He had no small difficulties to contend with; for the planters and the colonial authorities were united against him, and even the Admiral on the station coincided with their views, and gave orders that the Americans should be allowed free access to the islands. Still Nelson persevered. Transmitting a respectful remonstrance to the Admiral, he seized four of the American ships, which, after due notice, refused to quit the island of Nevis; and after a long and tedious process at law, in which he incurred much anxiety and expense, he succeeded in procuring their condemnation by the Admiralty Court. Many other ships were condemned on the same ground. Neither his services in this matter, nor his efforts to expose and remedy the peculiarities and dishonesty of the government agents, in almost all matters connected with naval affairs in the West Indies, were duly acknowledged by the Government at home; and in moments of spleen, when suffering under inconveniences which a conscientious discharge of his duty had brought on him, he talked of quitting the service of an ungrateful country. In March, 1787, he married Mrs. Nisbet, a West-Indian lady, and in the same year returned to England. He continued unemployed till January, 1793; when, on the breaking out of the revolutionary war, he was appointed to the Agamemnon, sixty-four, and ordered to serve in the Mediterranean under the command of Lord Hood.

An ample field for action was now open to him. Lord Hood, who had known him in the West Indies, and appreciated his merits, employed him to co-operate with Paoli in delivering Corsica from its subjection to France; and most laboriously and ably did he perform the duty intrusted to him. The siege and capture of Bastia was entirely owing to his efforts; and at the siege of Calvi, during which he lost an eye, and throughout the train of successes which brought about the temporary annexation of Corsica to the British crown, his services, and those of the brave crew of the Agamemnon, were conspicuous. In 1795 Nelson was selected to co-operate with the Austrian and Sardinian troops in opposing the progress of the French in the north of Italy. The incapacity, if not dishonesty, and the bad success of those with whom he had to act, rendered this service irksome and inglorious; and his mortification was heightened when orders were sent out to withdraw the fleet from the Mediterranean, and evacuate Corsica and Elba. These reverses, however, were the prelude to a day of glory. On February 13, 1797, the British fleet, commanded by Sir John Jervis, fell in with the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent.

In the battle which ensued, Nelson, who had been raised to the rank of Commodore, and removed to the Captain, seventy-four, bore a most distinguished part. Apprehensive lest the enemy might be enabled to escape without fighting, he did not hesitate to disobey signals; and executed a manœuvre which brought the Captain into close action at once with four first-rates, an eighty, and two seventy-four-gun ships. Captain Trowbridge, in the Culloden, immediately came to his support, and they maintained the contest for near an hour against this immense disparity of force. One first-rate and one seventy-four dropped astern disabled; but the Culloden was also crippled, and the Captain was fired on by five ships of the line at once; when Captain Collingwood, in the Excellent, came up and engaged the huge Santissima Trinidad, of one hundred and thirty-six guns. By this time the Captain's rigging was all shot away; and she lay unmanageable abreast of the eighty-gun ship, the S. Nicolas. Nelson seized the opportunity to board, and was himself among the first to enter the Spanish ship. She struck after a short struggle; and, sending for fresh men, he led the way from his prize to board the S. Josef, of one hundred and twelve guns, exclaiming, "Westminster Abbey or victory." The ship immediately surrendered. Nelson received the most lively and public thanks for his services from the Admiral, who was raised to the peerage by the title of Earl St. Vincent. Nelson received the Order of the Bath; he had already been made Rear-Admiral, before tidings of the battle reached England.

During the spring, Sir Horatio Nelson commanded the inner squadron employed in the blockade of Cadiz. He was afterwards despatched on an expedition against Teneriffe, which was defeated with considerable loss to the assailants. The Admiral himself lost his right arm, and was obliged to return to England, where he languished more than four months before the cure of his wound was completed. His services were rewarded by a pension of £1,000. On this occasion he was required by official forms to present a memorial of the services in which he had been engaged; and as our brief account can convey no notion of the constant activity of his early life, we quote the abstract of this paper given by Mr. Southey. "It stated that he had been in four actions with the fleets of the enemy, and in three actions with boats employed in cutting out of harbour, in destroying vessels, and in taking three towns; he had served on shore with the army four months, and commanded the batteries at the sieges of Bastia and Calvi; he had assisted at the capture of seven sail of the line, six frigates, four corvettes, and eleven privateers; taken and

destroyed near fifty sail of merchant vessels, and actually been engaged against the enemy upwards of a hundred and twenty times; in which service he had lost his right eye and right arm, and been severely wounded and bruised in his body."

Early in 1798 Nelson went out in the Vanguard to rejoin Lord St. Vincent off Cadiz. He was immediately despatched with a squadron into the Mediterranean, to watch an armament known to be fitting out at Toulon; the destination of which excited much anxiety. It sailed May 20, attacked and took Malta, and then proceeded, as Nelson supposed, to Egypt. Strengthened by a powerful reinforcement, he made all sail for Alexandria; but there no enemy had been seen or heard of. He returned in haste along the north coast of the Mediterranean to Sicily, refreshed the fleet, and again sailed to the eastward. On nearing Alexandria the second time, August 1, he had the pleasure of seeing the object of his toilsome cruise moored in Aboukir Bay, in line of battle. It appeared afterwards that the two fleets must have crossed each other on the night of June 22.

The French fleet consisted of thirteen ships of the line and four frigates; the British of the same number of ships of the line, and one fifty-gun ship. In number of guns and men the French had a decided superiority. It was evening before the British fleet came up. The battle began at half-past six; night closed in at seven, and the struggle was continued through the darkness, a magnificent and awful spectacle to thousands who watched the engagement with eager anxiety. Victory was not long doubtful. The two first ships of the French line were dismasted in a quarter of an hour; the third, fourth, and fifth were taken by half-past eight; about ten, the L'Orient, Admiral Bruey's flagship, blew up. By day-break the two rear ships, which had not been engaged, cut their cables and stood out to sea, in company with two frigates, leaving nine ships of the line in the hands of the British, who were too much crippled to engage in pursuit. Two ships of the line and two frigates were burnt or sunk. Three out of the four ships which escaped were subsequently taken; and thus, of the whole armament, only a single frigate returned to France.

This victory, the most complete and most important then known in naval warfare, raised Nelson to the summit of glory; and presents and honours were showered on him from all quarters. The gratitude of his country was expressed, inadequately in comparison with the rewards bestowed on others for less important services, by raising him to the peerage, by the title of Baron Nelson of the Nile, with a pension of £2,000. The Court of Naples, to which the battle of Aboukir

was as a reprieve from destruction, testified a due sense of their obligation by bestowing on him the dukedom and domain of Bronte, in Sicily. From Alexandria Nelson went to Naples, much shattered in health by the fatigue and intense anxiety which he had experienced during his long cruise, and suffering from a severe wound in the head, received in the recent battle. He was most kindly received by Sir William Hamilton, the British ambassador; and here commenced that fatal intimacy with the celebrated Lady Hamilton, which ruined his domestic peace, and led to the only stains upon his public life. Her influence ruled him in all transactions in which the Neapolitan Court was interested: and as she sought in all things to gratify the Queen, to whom she was devotedly attached, the passions and follies of a court corrupt and childish beyond example, were too often allowed to warp the conduct of a British Admiral, who hitherto had sought the welfare of his country, even in preference to his own honour and prospects of advancement. His best friends saw and lamented the consequences of his weakness, and remonstrated, but to no purpose; and he himself, unable to control this passion, or to stifle the uneasy feelings to which it gave birth, appears from his private letters to have been thoroughly unhappy. Overpowering that influence must have been, when it could induce the gallant and generous Nelson to annul a treaty of surrender concluded with the Neapolitan revolutionists, under the joint authority of the Neapolitan Royalist General, and the British Captain commanding in the Bay of Naples, and to deliver up the prisoners to the vengeance of the court, on the sole plea that he would grant no terms to rebels but those of unconditional submission.

The autumn of 1798, the whole of 1799, and part of 1800, Nelson spent in the Mediterranean, employed in the recovery of Malta, in protecting Sicily, and in co-operating to expel the French from the Neapolitan continental dominions. In 1800 various causes of discontent led him to solicit leave to return to England, where he was received with the enthusiasm due to his services.

Soon afterwards, still mastered by his passion, he separated himself formally from Lady Nelson. In March, 1801, he sailed as second in command of the expedition against Copenhagen, led by Sir Hyde Parker. The dilatoriness with which it was conducted increased the difficulties of this enterprise; and might have caused it to fail, had not Nelson's energy and talent been at hand to overcome the obstacles occasioned by this delay. The attack was intrusted to him by Sir Hyde Parker, and executed April 2, with his usual promptitude and success. After a fierce engagement, with great slaughter on both sides, the

greater part of the Danish line of defence was captured or silenced. Nelson then sent a flag of truce on shore, and an armistice was concluded. He bore honourable testimony to the gallantry of his opponents. "The French," he said, "fought bravely, but they could not have supported for one hour the fight which the Danes had supported for four." May 5, Sir Hyde Parker was recalled, and Nelson appointed Commander-in-Chief: but no further hostilities occurred, and suffering greatly from the climate, he almost immediately returned home. For this battle he was raised to the rank of Viscount.

At this time much alarm prevailed with respect to the meditated invasion of England; and the command of the coast from Orfordness to Beachy Head was offered to him, and accepted. But he thought the alarm idle; he felt the service to be irksome; and gladly retired from it at the peace of Amiens. When war was renewed in 1803, he took the command of the Mediterranean fleet. For more than a year he kept his station off Toulon, eagerly watching for the French fleet. In January, 1805, it put to sea, and escaped the observation of his look-out ships. He made for Egypt, and failing to meet with them, returned to Malta, where he found information that they had been dispersed in a gale, and forced to put back to Toulon. Villeneuve put to sea again, March 31, formed a junction with the Spanish fleet in Cadiz, and sailed for the West Indies. Thither Nelson followed him, after considerable delay for want of information and from contrary winds; but the enemy still eluded his pursuit, and he was obliged to retrace his anxious course to Europe, without the longed-for meeting, and with no other satisfaction than that of having frustrated by his diligence their designs on our colonies. June 20, 1805, he landed at Gibraltar, that being the first time that he had set foot ashore since June 16, 1803. After cruising in search of the enemy till the middle of August, he was ordered to Portsmouth, where he learned that an indecisive action had taken place between the combined fleets returning from the West Indies, and the British under Sir Robert Calder.

He had not been many days established at home before certain news arrived that the French and Spanish fleets had entered Cadiz. Eager to gain the reward of his long watchings, and laborious pursuit, he again offered his services, which were gladly accepted. He embarked at Portsmouth, September 14, 1805, on board the Victory, to take the command of the fleet lying off Cadiz under Admiral Collingwood, his early friend and companion in the race of fame. The last battle in which Nelson was engaged was fought off Cape Trafalgar, October 21, 1805. The enemy were superior in number of ships, and still more

in size and weight of metal. Nelson bore down on them in two lines ; heading one himself, while Collingwood in the Royal Sovereign led the other, which first entered into action. " See," cried Nelson, as the Royal Sovereign cut through the centre of the enemy's line, and muzzle to muzzle engaged a three-decker ; " see how that noble fellow Collingwood carries his ship into action." Collingwood on the other hand said to his Captain, " Rotherham, what would Nelson give to be here." As the Victory approached an incessant raking fire was directed against her, by which fifty of her men were killed and wounded before a single gun was returned. Nelson steered for his old opponent at Cape St. Vincent, the Santissima Trinidad, distinguished by her size, and opened his fire at four minutes after twelve, engaging the Redoutable with his starboard, the Santissima Trinidad and Bucentaur with his larboard guns.

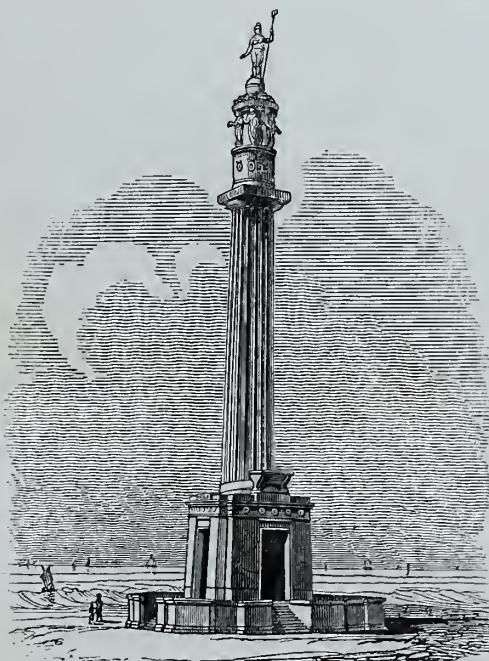
About a quarter past one, a musket-ball, fired from the mizen-top of the Redoutable, struck him on the left shoulder, and he fell. From the first he felt the wound to be mortal. He suffered intense pain, yet still preserved the liveliest interest in the fate of the action ; and the joy visible in his countenance as often as the hurrahs of the crew announced that an enemy had struck, testified how near his heart, even in the agonies of death, was the accomplishment of the great work to which his life had been devoted. He lived to know that his victory was complete and glorious, and expired tranquilly at half-past four. His last words were, " Thank God, I have done my duty."

He had indeed done his duty, and completed his task ; for thenceforth no hostile fleet presumed to contest the dominion of the sea. It may seem mournful, that he did not survive to enjoy the thanks and honours with which a grateful country would have rejoiced to recompense this crowning triumph. But he had reached the pinnacle of fame ; and his death in the hour of victory has tended far more than a few years of peaceful life, to keep alive his memory in the hearts of a people which loved, and a navy which adored him. In the eloquent words of the distinguished author from whom this sketch is compiled, " He cannot be said to have fallen prematurely whose work was done ; nor ought he to be lamented, who died so full of honours, and at the height of human fame. The most triumphant death is that of the martyr : the most awful, that of the martyred patriot : the most splendid, that of the hero in the hour of victory. He has left us a name and an example which are at this hour inspiring thousands of the youth of England : a name which is our pride, and an example which will continue to be our shield and our strength."

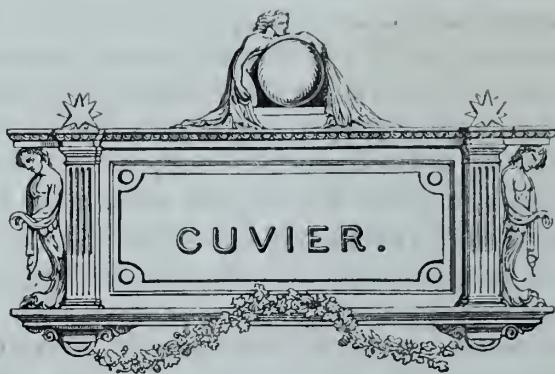
A few words, before we conclude, on those points which appear to us to have constituted the peculiar excellence of Nelson's character, the real source of his greatness. We cannot attribute it solely to personal courage, or professional skill: fearless as he was, the navy contained thousands of hearts as fearless as his own; skilful as he was, there may have been other officers not less skilful than himself. But to courage, talent, and a thorough knowledge of nautical affairs, he joined a degree of political and moral courage, and disinterestedness rarely equalled. To do his duty seems always to have been his first object: not to do all that was required, but all that could be done. With this view he never hesitated to run the risk of professional censure when the emergency seemed to demand it. Many instances are on record in which he acted contrary to orders: some, when he knew that strict obedience would have been mischievous, in circumstances which the framers of the orders could not have foreseen: others where he disobeyed the commands of a superior on the spot, because he knew them to be illegal, or prejudicial to the interests of his country. The most remarkable of these is his conduct in the West Indies, because he had then no established reputation to support him. But Nelson was well aware that this is a course which no officer can be justified in pursuing, except under the full and clear conviction, not only that his own views are just, but that the occasion is of sufficient importance to justify such a deviation from the rules of service; and that, even when the transgression is justified by the event, it yet involves a most serious degree of responsibility. "Well," he said, after the battle of Copenhagen, "I have fought contrary to orders, and I shall perhaps be hanged. Never mind, let them." The feeling which prompted these words, though uttered half in jest, can hardly be mistaken. Another of the most admirable qualities of his character is the extraordinary power which he possessed of attaching all who served under him. His sailors adored him; and many touching anecdotes might be told of their affection. "Our Nel," they used to say, "is as brave as a lion, and as gentle as a lamb." To his officers he was equally kind and considerate. Happy was the midshipman who in Nelson's younger days could obtain a berth in his ship. He himself attended to their instruction, and was diligent in so training them, as to become ornaments to the service by their gentlemanly feeling and deportment, as well as by their professional skill. Humane as brave, it was ever his object to avoid needless bloodshed: and though the virulence of national enmity led him into the most bitter expressions of hatred to the French, he was ever eager to

rescue a drowning, or afford hospitality and protection to a beaten enemy. “ May humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet,” was part of the prayer which he composed on the morning of Trafalgar. There is indeed one stain on his humanity, one stain on his good faith ;—the deliverance of the Neapolitan revolutionists to the vengeance of a cowardly and cruel court. Of this we have already spoken ; and far from excusing, we do not even wish to palliate it. It was the result of his fatal attachment to Lady Hamilton : and it is the duty of the biographer to point out that the one great blot on his domestic, led to the one great blot upon his public character. He has added another to the list of great men, who, proof against other temptations, have yielded to female influence ; and we may add (for it is a valuable lesson) that in so doing he not only blemished his fame, but ruined his happiness.

Towards his country, however, Nelson was faultless ; and its gratitude has been worthily shown by heaping honours on his memory. His brother was made an earl, and an estate was purchased for the family, and a pension granted to support the title. His remains were brought to England, and interred with the utmost pomp of funeral ceremony in the cemetery of St. Paul’s. His ship, the Victory, is still preserved at Portsmouth, and will long continue to be a chief object of interest to the visitors of that mighty arsenal.



Nelson's Pillar, at Yarmouth.



GEORGE LEOPOLD CHRISTIAN FREDERIC DAGOBERT CUVIER was born August 23, 1769, at Montbeliard, a small town in Alsace, which then formed part of the territory of the Duke of Wurtemburg. His father was a retired officer, living upon his pension, who had formerly held a commission in a Swiss regiment in the service of France. He had the inestimable advantage of possessing a very sensible mother, who even in infancy attended with sedulous care to the formation of his character, and the development of his mind. He gave early indications that nature had endowed him with her choicest intellectual gifts. A memory of extraordinary strength, joined to industry, and to the power of fixing his attention steadily upon whatever he was engaged in, enabled him to master all the ordinary studies of youth with facility; and by the time he was fourteen years of age he had acquired a fair knowledge of the ancient, and of several modern languages, and had made considerable progress in the mathematics, besides having stored his mind by a wide range of historical reading. He very early gave proofs of a talent for drawing, which in after-life proved of material service in his researches into natural history. When he was twelve years old he read the works of Buffon with avidity, and he no doubt received from the writings of that accomplished and elegant historian of nature an early bias towards the study of zoology. While he was at school he instituted a little academy of sciences among his companions, of which he was elected the president: his sleeping-room was their hall of meeting, and the bottom of his bed the president's



Engraved by J. Thomson

20 V T 10

From an original drawing in the possession  
of General La Motte-Picquet



chair. They read extracts from books of history, travels, and natural philosophy, which they discussed ; and the debate was usually followed by an opinion on the merits of the question, pronounced from the chair.

In 1783 the reigning Duke of Wurtemburg visited Montbeliard ; and became acquainted with the unusual attainments of young Cuvier, who had then reached the fourteenth year of his age. Struck by the early promise of future eminence, he offered to take him under his own protection. The proposal was readily accepted, and the future philosopher went to Stutgard to prosecute his studies in the university of that place. He continued there four years, and did not fail to turn to good account the excellent opportunities which were afforded to him, of laying the foundation of that extensive acquaintance with every great department of human knowledge, for which he was in after-life so eminently distinguished. The universality of his genius was as remarkable as the depth and accuracy of his learning in that particular field of science, with which his name is more especially associated. He not only gained the highest academical prizes, but was decorated by the Duke with an order ; a distinction which was only conferred upon five or six out of the four hundred students at the university.

He had now arrived at an age when it was necessary for him to choose a profession, and his inclination led him to seek employment in one of the public offices in the country of his patron. This he would probably have obtained ; but, happily for science, the circumstances of his parents made it impossible for him to linger in expectation, and he changed his views. In July, 1788, being then in his nineteenth year, he accepted the office of tutor in a Protestant family in Normandy, having been himself brought up in that faith.

The family lived in a very retired situation near the sea ; and Cuvier was not so constantly engaged with his pupils as to prevent him from cultivating those branches of science, for which he had imbibed a decided taste while listening to the lectures of Abel, the professor of natural history at Stutgard. He devoted himself especially to the study of the Mollusca, for which his vicinity to the sea afforded him good opportunities ; and continued his researches uninterruptedly for six years in this retirement. The reign of terror at Paris, which spared neither virtue nor talent, drove M. Tessier, a member of the Academy of Sciences, to seek refuge in Normandy. He became acquainted with the young naturalist, and soon learned to appreciate his talents ; and he introduced him to the correspondence

of several of the more eminent men of science in Paris, among whom were Lametheric, Olivier, and Lacepède. The impression which Cuvier made upon his correspondents was so great, that when tranquillity was restored, they invited him to come to the capital. He accepted the invitation, and in the spring of 1795 removed to Paris. He was soon afterwards appointed Professor of Natural History in the central school of the Pantheon.

Being very desirous of obtaining some official connexion with the Museum of Natural History at the Jardin des Plantes, with the view of gaining free access to the valuable collections there deposited, he solicited the aid of his scientific friends, and by their exertions, particularly those of De Jussieu, Geoffroy, and Lacepède, he was nominated assistant to Mertrud, the professor of comparative anatomy, a chair which had been recently instituted. Here he had free scope to indulge his passion for that branch of science, and by his indefatigable exertions he speedily brought together a very copious supply of illustrations for his lectures. He never ceased to make the museum a primary object of his care, and at last formed the most perfect and the most splendid collection of comparative anatomy which exists in the world. The excellence of his lectures, in which the interest of the subject was heightened by his eloquence and easy delivery, attracted a crowd of auditors; and while he thus excited and extended a taste for a department of science previously but little cultivated, those who listened to him spread the fame of the young professor.

At the establishment of the Institute in 1796 he was chosen one of the original members; and the papers which he read before that body, giving an account of his researches and discoveries in comparative anatomy, enriched their memoirs, and procured for him a high and widely extended reputation at an early period of life. In 1800 he was appointed Secretary to the Institute. In the same year Bonaparte was appointed President. Cuvier thus, by virtue of his office, was brought into immediate and frequent communication with that extraordinary man; an event which had a material influence upon his future destiny, and opened to him new and wide fields of usefulness and distinction. Such were the powers of his mind, and so great was the versatility of his genius, that in whatever situation he was placed his superiority was soon acknowledged by his associates.

In the year 1802 the attention of the First Consul was directed to the subject of public instruction, and six inspectors-general were commissioned to organize lycéums or colleges in thirty towns of France. Cuvier was one of them, and he left Paris to execute the duties which

had been assigned to him in the provinces. From this period his attention was always particularly directed to the subject of education ; and his labours in that cause have had the most important influence upon every institution for public instruction in France, from the University of Paris down to the most humble village school. At the foundation of the Imperial University in 1808, Cuvier was named a member of its council for life. When Italy was annexed to the French empire, he was charged at three different times with missions to that country, for the purpose of re-organizing the old academies and colleges, and of establishing new ones : and in the last of those missions in 1813, although a Protestant, he was sent to form the University at Rome. In 1811 he went into Belgium and Holland to perform the same duties ; and the reports which he drew up on that occasion, which were afterwards printed, possess great interest, especially in those parts where he speaks of the schools in Holland for the lower classes. He felt how important it is to the welfare of a nation, that good education should be within reach even of the poor : and there is no country in Europe where that subject is attended to with more enlightened views than in Holland, where excellent primary schools have been in operation for nearly half a century. When the great measure for the general introduction of schools for the lower orders throughout France, was brought forward in 1821, the duty of drawing up the plan upon which they were to be established was confided to Cuvier ; and his enlightened benevolence and practical good sense are equally conspicuous in the system which on his recommendation was adopted. It has proved admirably adapted to the ends in view. The direction of the Protestant schools was more particularly intrusted to him, and he introduced into all those which had previously existed many important improvements.

In February, 1815, the university was remodelled by the Bourbon government, and Cuvier was appointed a member of the Royal Council of Public Instruction. Shortly afterwards came the events of the Hundred Days, and among them the restoration of the Imperial University. Cuvier was re-appointed to his seat in the Council, for they felt that they could not do there without him. In four months another revolution took place in the university, as in other public establishments ; and as it was found that the system of the Royal University could not be resumed, a commission was appointed to execute the functions of the Grand Master, the Chancellor, and the Treasurer. In this commission the duties which had belonged to the Chancellor were assigned to Cuvier. In this station he was eminently

useful in maintaining the rights of the university under circumstances of no ordinary difficulty. He was twice President of the Commission, and each time for a year; but on account of his being a Protestant he could not retain that place permanently. But the Bishop, who, as a member of the commission, had discharged the duties which belonged to the Grand Master of the University, was appointed minister for ecclesiastical affairs; and Cuvier was nominated as his successor, so far as concerned the Protestant faculty of theology, and continued to act in this capacity for the rest of his life. As a member of the Council of State, and attached to the department of the Minister of the Interior, he had the direction of all matters relating to Protestant, and other religious congregations, not Catholic.

During his mission to Rome in 1813 he was appointed by Napoleon a member of the Council of State; and on the restoration of the Bourbons his political opinions formed no obstacle to his continuing in that place. Although he was left undisturbed in his situation at the university, he was removed from the Council of State during the Hundred Days; but resumed his seat when the fate of his former patron and master was sealed. It is to be regretted that a mind so powerful as that of Cuvier should not have felt the paramount importance of having settled opinions on the great principles of government; and the facility with which he made himself acceptable to the despotic Emperor, the weak and bigoted Bourbons, and the liberal government of Louis Philippe, showed a want of fixed public principle which casts a shade upon the memory of this great man.

As a member of the Council of State he took a distinguished lead, which indeed he never failed to do wherever he was placed, and he was eminently useful by his extraordinary talent for the despatch of business. He was a patient listener, and was never forward with his opinion; he allowed the useless talkers to have their course, and, while he appeared indifferent to what was going on, he was often drawing up a resolution, which his colleagues usually adopted without farther discussion, after he had given a short and luminous exposition of his views. For thirteen years previous to his death he was chairman of the Committee of the Council of State, to which the affairs of the interior belong; and the quantity of business which passed through his hands was wonderful. It was accomplished by his great skill in making those useful with whom he acted; by his talent in keeping his colleagues to the point in their discussions; and by his prodigious readiness of memory, which enabled him to go back at once to former decisions where the principle of the question under

deliberation had been already settled. His reading in history had been very extensive, and his attention was ever alive to what was passing around him, as well in other countries as in France; so that he brought to bear on the matter in debate, not speculative opinions merely, but maxims drawn from the experience of past and present times. In the Chamber of Deputies, of which he was a member for several years, he took an active part, and often originated measures. His manner as a speaker was very impressive, and the rich stores of his mind, and his ready and natural eloquence commanded attention. At the end of 1831 he was created a peer; and during the short time he sat in the Upper Chamber, he took a prominent part in its business, and drew up some important reports of committees to which he belonged.

But his reputation as a statesman was confined to France: his achievements in science have spread his fame over the civilized world. We can in this place do little more than mention the titles of the most important of Cuvier's works; even to name all would carry us beyond our limits. His earliest production was a memoir read before the Natural History Society of Paris, in 1795, and published in the *Décade Philosophique*. In this paper he objects to the divisions of certain of the lower animals adopted by Linnæus, and proposes a more scientific classification of the mollusca, crustacea, worms, insects, and other invertebrate animals. His attention had been long directed to that branch of natural history, and his subsequent researches in the same department, most of which have been communicated to the world through the medium of the '*Annales du Museum*,' have thrown great light on that obscure and curious part of the creation. Three years afterwards, he published his *Elementary View of the Natural History of Animals*, which contains an outline of the lectures he delivered at the Pantheon. In this work he displayed the vast extent of his acquaintance with the works of his predecessors, and, at the same time, the originality of his own mind, by introducing a new arrangement of the animal kingdom, founded on more exact investigation and comparison of the varieties which exist in anatomical structure. With the assistance of his friends, Dumeril and Duverney, he published, in 1802, his '*Leçons d'Anatomie Comparée*,' in two volumes, octavo, afterwards extended to five. These are singularly lucid and exact, and form the most complete work on the subject which has yet appeared.

The next important publication we have to notice, is one in which he embodied the results of his extensive researches in a very inte-

resting field of inquiry, concerning the remains of extinct species of animals which are found enveloped in solid rocks, or buried in the beds of gravel that cover the surface of the earth. We are disposed to think his ‘*Recherches sur les Ossemens Fossiles*’ the most important of his works, the most illustrious and imperishable monument of his fame. The quarries in the neighbourhood of Paris abound in fossil bones; and he had great facilities for collecting the valuable specimens which were almost daily discovered in the ordinary working of the quarry. When he went to Italy, he had an opportunity of seeing animal remains of the same sort procured by the naturalists of that country from their native soil, and preserved in their museums. His attention became now specially attracted to the subject; and having accumulated materials from all parts of the world, he announced the important truths at which he had arrived in the work above-mentioned, in four quarto volumes, in the year 1812. A new edition, enlarged to five volumes, appeared in 1817, and in 1824 it was extended to seven volumes, illustrated by two hundred engravings. No one who was not profoundly skilled in comparative anatomy could have entered upon the inquiry with any prospect of success; and Cuvier not only possessed that qualification, but was singularly constituted by nature for the task. His powerful memory was particularly susceptible of retaining impressions conveyed to it by the eye: he saw at a glance the most minute variations of form, and what he saw he not only never forgot, but he had the power of representing upon paper with the utmost accuracy and despatch. It is very seldom that the entire skeleton of an animal is found in a fossil state: in most instances the bones have been separated and scattered before they were entombed, and a tusk, a jaw, or a single joint of the back-bone is very often all that is met with, and frequently too in a mutilated state. But an instructed mind like that of Cuvier was able to re-construct the whole animal from the inspection of one fragment. He had discovered by his previous researches such a connexion between the several bones, that a particular curvature, or a small protuberance on a jaw, or a tooth, was sufficient to indicate a particular species of animal, and to prove that the fragment could not have belonged to any other. The ‘*Recherches sur les Ossemens Fossiles*’ have made us acquainted with more than seventy species of animals before unknown.

The preliminary discourse in the first volume is a masterly exposition of the revolutions which the crust of the earth has undergone: revolutions to which the animal creation has been equally subject. It

is written with great clearness and elegance, and is so much calculated to interest general readers as well as men of science, that it has been translated into most of the European languages. The English translation, by Professor Jameson, published under the title of ‘Essay on the Theory of the Earth,’ has gone through several editions.

In his examination of the fossil bones found near Paris, Cuvier was led to inquire into the geological structure of the country around that capital. He assumed M. Alexander Brongniart as his associate, and the result of their joint labours is contained in one of the volumes of the work now under consideration, in an *Essay on the Mineralogy of the Environs of Paris*. This essay formed a great epoch in geological science, for it was then that the grand division of the tertiary formations was first shown to form a distinct class. A new direction and a fresh impulse was thus given to geological investigations; and many of the most important general truths at which we have now arrived in this science, have been established by discoveries to which the essay of Cuvier and Brongniart led the way.

In 1817 appeared the first edition of the ‘*Règne Animal*,’ in four octavo volumes, one of which was written by the celebrated naturalist Latreille. This work gives an account of the structure and history of all existing and extinct races of animals: it has subsequently been enlarged. Cuvier began, in conjunction with M. Valenciennes, an extensive general work on fishes, which it was calculated would extend to twenty volumes. Eight only have appeared; for the embarrassments among the Parisian booksellers, in 1830, suspended the publication, and it has thus been left incomplete; but a great mass of materials was collected, and we may hope that they will yet be published. In addition to these great undertakings, he had been for years collecting materials for a stupendous work, a complete system of comparative anatomy, to be illustrated by drawings from nature, and chiefly from objects in the Museum at the Jardin des Plantes. Above a thousand drawings, many executed by his own hand, are said to have been made. Looking back to what he had already accomplished, and considering his health and age, for he was only in his sixty-third year, it was not unreasonable in him to hope to see the great edifice erected, of which he had laid the foundation and collected the materials. But unfortunately for the cause of science it was ordered otherwise, and there is something particularly touching in the last words he uttered to his friend the Baron Pasquier, and in sounds, too, scarcely articulate, from the malady which so suddenly cut short his career—“*Vous le voyez, il*

*y a loin de l'homme du Mardi (nous nous étions rencontrés ce jour là) à l'homme du Dimanche : et tant de choses, cependant, qui me restaient à faire ! trois ouvrages importans à mettre au jour, les materiaux préparés, tout était disposé dans ma tête, il ne me restait plus qu'à écrire."*

" You see how it is, how different the man of Tuesday (we had met on that day) from the man of Sunday : and so many things too that remained for me to do ! three important works to bring out, the materials prepared, all disposed in order in my head, I had nothing left to do but to write." In four hours afterwards that wonderfully organized head had become a mere mass of insensible matter.

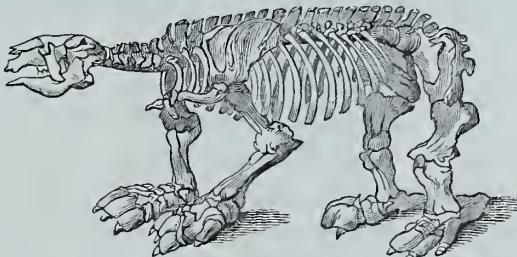
Besides the works above enumerated, and many memoirs in the transactions of the scientific bodies of Paris, he has given to the world, in four octavo volumes, a History of the Progress of the Physical Sciences, from 1789 to 1827, which evince his genius and extensive erudition. The first volume is a reprint of a report which he presented, as Perpetual Secretary of the Institute, to Napoleon, in 1808, on the Progress of the Physical Sciences from 1789 to 1807. In the same capacity, during thirty-two years, he pronounced the customary Eloges upon deceased members of the Institute. These are collected in three octavo volumes, and bear witness to the versatility of his genius and the extent of his attainments ; for whether he is recording the merits of a mathematician, a chemist, a botanist, a geologist, or the cultivator of any other department of science, he shows himself equally conversant with his subject.

He lived at the Jardin des Plantes for nearly forty years, surrounded by the objects which engrossed so great a portion of his thoughts, and there received every Saturday the men of science of Paris, and all others who visited that capital from any part of the world. Professors and pupils met in his rooms to listen with instruction and delight to his conversation, for he was accessible to all. Although compelled to be a very rigid economist of his time, he was so goodnatured and considerate, that if any person who had business to transact with him called at an unexpected hour, he never sent him away ; saying, that one who lived so far off had no right to deny himself. Every thing in his house was so arranged as to secure economy of time : his library consisted of several apartments, and each great subject he attended to had a separate room allotted to it ; and he usually worked in the apartment belonging to the subject he was at the moment engaged with, so that he might be surrounded with his materials. His ordinary custom, when he returned from attending public business in Paris, was to go at once to his study, passing a few

minutes by the way in the room where his family sat; which latterly consisted of Madame Cuvier and her daughter by a former marriage. He came back when dinner was announced, usually with a book in his hand; and returned soon after dinner to his study, where he remained till eleven. He then came to Madame Cuvier's room, and had generally some of the lighter literature of the day read aloud to him. Sometimes the book selected was of a graver cast, for it is said that during the last year of his life he had the greater part of Cicero read to him. His manner was courteous, kind, and encouraging: every one who took an interest in any subject with which Cuvier was familiar, felt assured that he might approach him without fear of meeting with a cold or discouraging reception.

He had four children, but lost them all. The last taken from him was a daughter, who was suddenly carried off by consumption on the eve of her marriage. He was most tenderly attached to her, and it required all the efforts of his powerful mind to prevent his sinking under the blow. He found distraction by intense thought on other subjects, but not consolation, for the wound never healed.

On Tuesday, the 8th of May, 1832, he opened his usual course at the College of France, with a particularly eloquent introductory lecture, full of enthusiasm in his subject, to the delight of his numerous audience. As he left the room he was attacked with the first symptoms of the disease which was so soon to prove fatal: it was a paralytic seizure. He was well enough, however, to preside the next day at the Committee of the Council of State, but that was the last duty he performed. He died on the following Sunday, leaving behind him an imperishable name, which will be held in honour in the most advanced state of human learning.

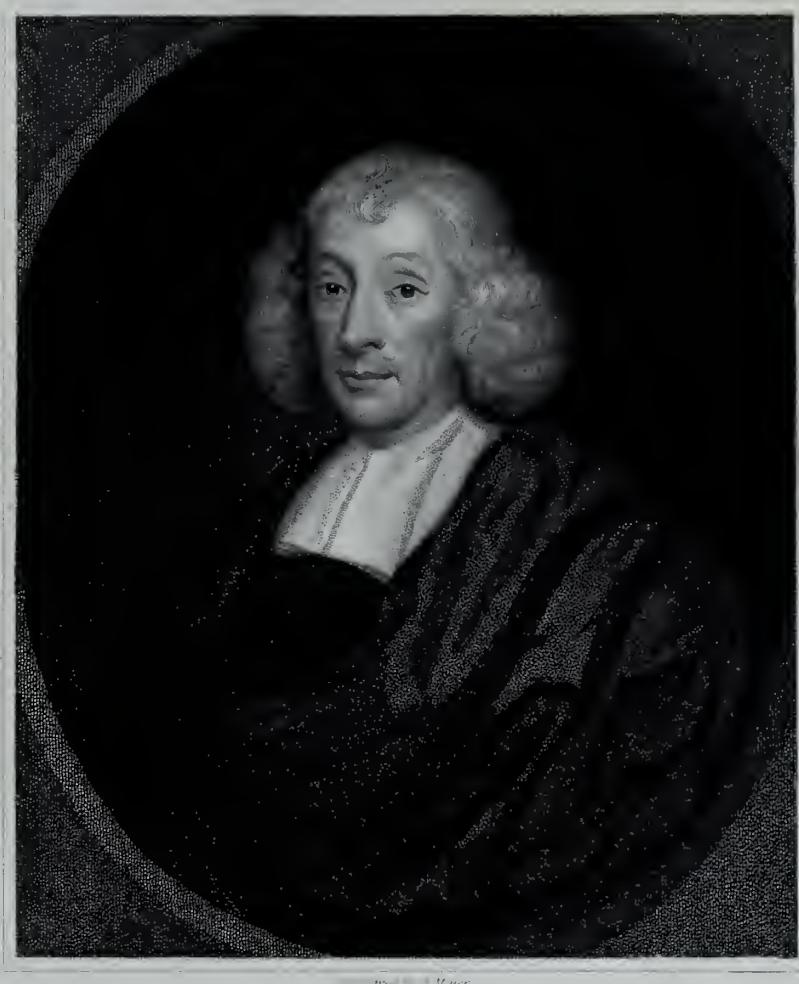


Skeleton of the *Megatherium*.



JOHN RAY, whom Haller describes as the greatest botanist in the memory of man, and whose writings on animals are pronounced by Cuvier to be the foundation of all modern zoology, was born on the 29th of November, 1628, at Black Notley, near Braintree, in Essex. His father was a blacksmith, who availed himself of the advantages of a free grammar school at Black Notley to bestow upon his son a liberal education. John was designed for holy orders; and was accordingly entered at Catherine Hall, Cambridge, in his sixteenth year. He subsequently removed to Trinity, of which college he was elected a Fellow, in the same year with the celebrated Isaac Barrow. In 1651 he was appointed Greek Lecturer of his college; and afterwards Mathematical Lecturer and Humanity Reader.

In the midst of his professional occupations Ray appears to have devoted himself to that course of observation of the works of nature, which was afterwards to constitute the business and pleasure of his life, and upon which his enduring reputation was to be built. In 1660 he published his ‘Catalogus Plantarum circa Cantabrigiam nascentium,’ which work he states to be the result of ten years of research. He must, therefore, have become a naturalist in the best sense of the word—he must have observed as well as read—at the period when he was struggling for university honours, and obtaining them in company with some of the most eminent persons of his own day. Before the publication of his catalogue, he had visited many parts of England and Wales, for the purpose chiefly of collecting their native plants; and his Itineraries, which were first published in 1760, under the title of ‘Select Remains of the learned John Ray,’ show that he was a careful and diligent observer of every matter that could enlarge his understanding and correct his taste. His principal companion in his favourite studies was his friend and pupil, Francis Willughby.



Mr. —— Huxley

RAY

*From an original Picture  
in the English Museum*

Under the Superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge



In December, 1660, Ray was ordained Deacon and Priest at the same time. But the chances of preferment in the church of England, which his admirable talents and learning, as well as the purity of his life and the genuine warmth of his piety, would probably have won for him, were at once destroyed by his honest and inflexible resolution not to subscribe to the conditions required by the Act of Uniformity of 1662, by which divines were called upon to swear that the oath entitled the Solemn League and Covenant was not binding upon those who had taken it. Ray was in consequence deprived of his fellowship. The affection of his pupil, Willughby, relieved him from the embarrassment which might have been a consequence of this misfortune. The two friends from this time appear to have dedicated themselves almost wholly to the study of natural history. They travelled upon the Continent for three years, from 1663 to 1666; and during the remainder of Willughby's life, which unfortunately was terminated in 1672, their time was principally occupied in observations which had for their object to examine and to register the various productions of nature, upon some method which should obviate the difficulty of those arbitrary and fanciful classifications which had prevailed up to their day. In the preface to his first botanical attempt, the Catalogue of Cambridge Plants, Ray describes the obstacles which he found in the execution of such a work;—he had no guide to consult, and he had to form a method of arrangement, solely by his own sagacity and patience. At that period, as he says in his ‘Wisdom of God in the Creation,’ “different colour, or multiplicity of leaves in the flower, and the like accidents, were sufficient to constitute a specific difference.” From a conversation with Ray a short time before his death, Derham has described the object which the two friends had in their agreeable but laborious pursuits. “These two gentlemen, finding the history of nature very imperfect, had agreed between themselves, before their travels beyond sea, to reduce the several tribes of things to a method; and to give accurate descriptions of the several species, from a strict view of them.” That Ray entered upon his task, however perplexing it might be, with the enthusiastic energy of a man really in love with his subject, we cannot doubt. “Willughby,” says Derham, “prosecuted his design with as great application as if he had been to get his bread thereby.” The good sense of Ray saw distinctly the right path in such an undertaking. There is a passage in his ‘Wisdom of God,’ which beautifully exhibits his own conception of the proper character of a naturalist: “Let it not suffice us to be book-learned, to read what others have written, and to take upon trust more falsehood than truth. But let us ourselves examine things as we have opportunity, and converse with nature as well as books. Let us endeavour to promote and

increase this knowledge, and make new discoveries ; not so much distrusting our own parts or despairing of our own abilities, as to think that our industry can add nothing to the invention of our ancestors, or correct any of their mistakes. Let us not think that the bounds of science are fixed like Hercules' pillars, and inscribed with a *ne plus ultra*. Let us not think we have done when we have learnt what they have delivered to us. The treasures of nature are inexhaustible. Here is employment enough for the vastest parts, the most indefatigable industries, the happiest opportunities, the most prolix and undisturbed vacancies." It is not difficult to imagine the two friends encouraging each other in their laborious career by sentiments such as these ; which are as worthy to be held in remembrance now that we are reaping the full advantage of their labours, and those of their many illustrious successors, as in the days when natural history was, for the most part, a tissue of extravagant fables and puerile conceits.

In 1667 Ray was admitted a Fellow of the Royal Society ; and he executed, about that time, a translation into Latin of his friend Bishop Wilkins' work, on a philosophical and universal language. In 1670 he published the first edition of his ' Catalogue of English Plants ;' and in 1672 appeared his ' Collection of English Proverbs ;' which he probably took up as a relaxation from his more systematic pursuits. In this year he suffered the irreparable loss of his friend Willughby. The history of letters presents us with few more striking examples of the advantages to the world, as well as to the individuals themselves, of such a cordial union for a great object. The affection of Ray for Willughby was of the noblest kind. He became the guardian and tutor of his children ; and he prepared his posthumous works for publication, with additions from his own pen, for which he claimed no credit, with a diligence and accuracy which showed that he considered the reputation of his friend as the most sacred of all trusts. In 1673, being in his forty-fifth year, Ray married. Willughby had left him an annuity of £60. He had three daughters. During the remainder of his long life, which reached to his 77th year, he resided in or near his native village, living contentedly, as a layman, upon very humble means, but indefatigably contributing to the advancement of natural history, and directing the study of it to the highest end,—the proof of the wisdom and goodness of the great Author of Nature.

The most celebrated of Ray's botanical publications is his ' Synopsis Methodica Stirpium Britannicarum.' Sir James Smith, in a memoir of Ray, in Rees's Encyclopaedia, declares that of all the systematical and practical Floras of any country, the second edition of Ray's Synopsis is the most perfect. The same writer, in the Transactions of the Linnæan Society, vol. iv., says of this Synopsis, " he examined every plant

recorded in his work, and even gathered most of them himself. He investigated their synonyms with consummate accuracy; and if the clearness and precision of other authors had equalled his, he would scarcely have committed an error." Ray's 'Methodus Plantarum Nova,' first published in 1682, has been superseded by other systems; but the accuracy of his observations, the precision of his language, and the clearness of his general views, tended greatly to the advancement of botanical science. His 'Historia Plantarum,' in three vols. folio, a vast compilation, including all the botanical knowledge of his day, is still in use, as a book of reference, by those who especially devote themselves to this study.

The zoological works of Ray have had a more direct and permanent influence upon the advancement of natural history, than his botanical. Amongst his zoological productions, the best authorities are agreed that we ought to include the greater part of those edited by him as the posthumous works of his friend Willughby. They are conceived upon the same principle as his own History of Plants, and are arranged upon a nearly similar plan; whilst the style of each is undoubtedly the same. In the original division of their great subject, Ray had chosen the vegetable kingdom, and Willughby the animal; and Ray, therefore, may have felt himself compelled to forego some of his own proper claims, that he might raise a complete monument to the memory of his friend. The Ornithology appeared in 1676; the History of Fishes in 1686. Ray, however, prepared several very important zoological works, of his entire claims to which there can be no doubt. The chief of these are, 'Synopsis methodica animalium quadrupedum et serpentini generis,' 1693, which he published during his life; 'Synopsis methodica avium,' and 'Synopsis methodica piscium,' edited by Derham, and published in 1713; and 'Historia insectorum,' printed at the expense of the Royal Society, in 1710. "The peculiar character of the zoological works of Ray," says Cuvier, "consists in clearer and more rigorous methods than those of any of his predecessors, and applied with more constancy and precision. The divisions which he has introduced into the classes of quadrupeds and birds have been followed by the English naturalists, almost to our own day; and one finds very evident traces of his system of birds in Linnæus, in Brisson, in Buffon, and in all the authors who are occupied with this class of animals. The Ornithology of Salerne is little more than a translation from the Synopsis; and Buffon has extracted from Willughby almost all the anatomical part of his History of Birds. Daubenton and Hauy have translated the History of Fishes, in great part, for their Dictionary of Ichthyology, in the 'Encyclopédie Methodique.'

'The Wisdom of God in the Creation' is the work upon which the

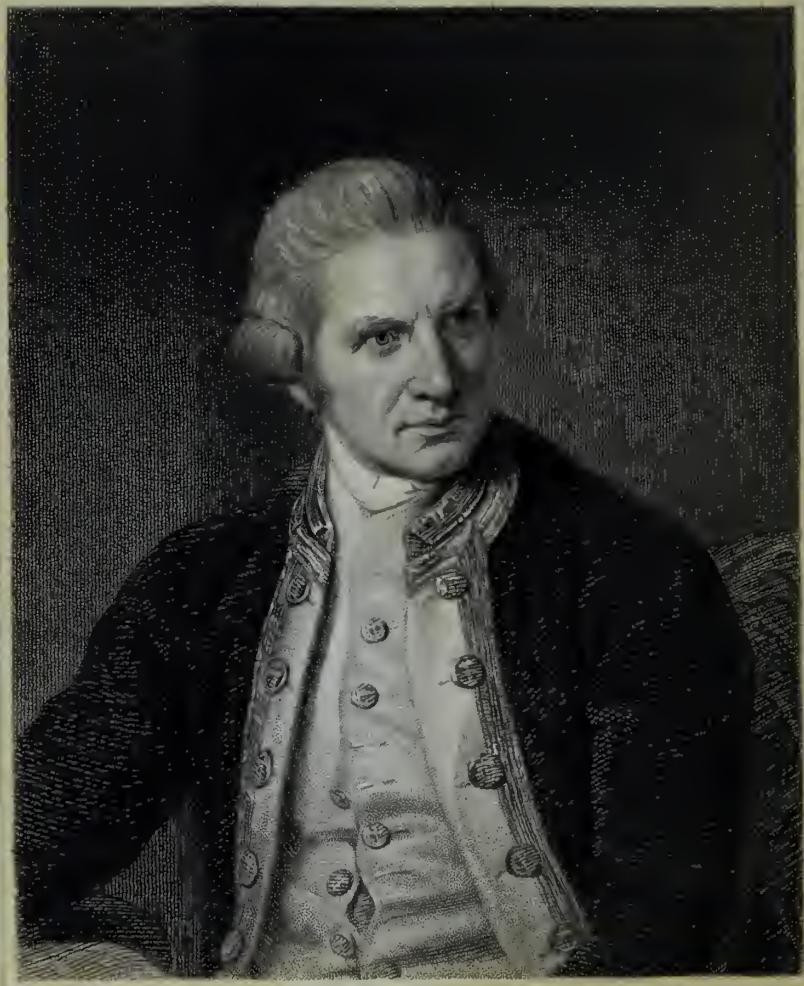
popular fame of Ray most deservedly rests. It is a book which perhaps more than any other in our language unites the precision of science to the warmth of devotion. It is delightful to see the ardour with which this good man dedicated himself to the observation of nature entering into his views of another state of existence, when our knowledge shall be made perfect, and the dim light with which we grope amidst the beautiful and wondrous objects by which we are surrounded, shall brighten into complete day. "It is not likely," says he, "that eternal life shall be a torpid and inactive state, or that it shall consist only in an uninterrupted and endless act of love; the other faculties shall be employed as well as the will, in actions suitable to, and perfective of their natures: especially the understanding, the supreme faculty of the soul, which chiefly differs in us from brute beasts, and makes us capable of virtue and vice, of rewards and punishments, shall be busied and employed in contemplating the works of God, and observing the divine art and wisdom manifested in the structure and composition of them; and reflecting upon their Great Architect the praise and glory due to him. Then shall we clearly see, to our great satisfaction and admiration, the ends and uses of those things, which here were either too subtle for us to penetrate and discover, or too remote and unaccessible for us to come to any distinct view of, viz. the planets and fixed stars; those illustrious bodies, whose contents and inhabitants, whose stores and furniture we have here so longing a desire to know, as also their mutual subserviency to each other. Now the mind of man being not capable at once to advert to more than one thing, a particular view and examination of such an innumerable number of vast bodies, and the great multitude of species, both of animate and inanimate beings, which each of them contains, will afford matter enough to exercise and employ our minds, I do not say to all eternity, but to many ages, should we do nothing else \*."

In addition to his 'Wisdom of God,' Ray published three 'Physico-Theological Discourses, concerning the Chaos, Deluge, and Dissolution of the World.' "This last presents to us," to use the words of Cuvier, "a system of geology as plausible as any of those which had appeared at this epoch, or for a long time afterwards." He also printed a work expressly of a theological character, 'A Persuasive to a Holy Life.'

Ray died on the 17th January, 1705, at his native place of Black Notley, whither he had retired, at Midsummer, 1679, as he himself expressed, "for the short pittance of time he had yet to live in this world." His memory has been done justice to by his countrymen. A most interesting commemoration of him was held in London, on the 29th Nov., 1828, being the two hundredth anniversary of his birth.

\* Wisdom of God in the Creation, p. 199, fifth edition.





Engraved by E. Saurin

CAPTAIN COOK

From an original Picture by Stone  
in the Gallery of Greenwich Hospital

Under the superintendance of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge



JAMES COOK was born October 27, 1728, at Marton, a village in the North Riding of Yorkshire, near Stockton-upon-Tees. His parents, who were farm-servants, of good esteem in their rank of life, apprenticed him when not thirteen years of age to a haberdasher at the fishing town of Staith, near Whitby. The employment proved ill suited to his taste ; and he soon quitted it, and bound himself to a ship-owner at Whitby. In course of time he became mate of one of his master's vessels in the coal trade ; that best of schools for practical seamanship.

In the spring of 1755 he was lying in the Thames, when war was declared between England and France, and a hot press for seamen ensued. He volunteered to serve on board the Eagle frigate, commanded by Captain, afterwards Sir Hugh Palliser, and soon won the esteem of his officers by his diligence and activity. In May, 1759, he was promoted to be master of the Mercury, in which he was present at the celebrated siege of Quebec. At the recommendation of Captain Palliser, he was employed to take soundings of the river St. Lawrence, opposite to, and preparatory to an attack on the French fortified camp ; and in this hazardous service he manifested so much sagacity and resolution, that he was afterwards ordered to survey the river below Quebec. The accurate chart, which was published as the result of his labours, furnishes a most satisfactory proof of Cooke's natural talents and steady industry ; for he could have derived little aid in such pursuits from the habits of his early life. In the autumn he was removed into the Northumberland man-of-war, stationed at Halifax, in Nova Scotia ; and he employed his leisure during the long winter in making up for the defects of his education, which had been merely such as a village school could supply. He now read Euclid for the first time, and

applied himself to study those branches of science, which promised to be most useful in his profession. Towards the end of 1762 he returned to England, and married ; but in 1763 he again went out to make a survey of Newfoundland. In 1764, his steady friend, Sir Hugh Palliser, being appointed Governor of Newfoundland, Cook was made Marine Surveyor of Newfoundland and Labrador. He held this office nearly four years, and his charts of those coasts remain in use up to this day.

In 1767 Government determined, at the request of the Royal Society, to send out astronomers to the South Pacific Ocean to observe the transit of Venus across the sun's disc. Cook's able discharge of his duties at Newfoundland, and the skill with which he observed an eclipse of the sun there, pointed him out to Mr. Stephens, Secretary to the Admiralty, as a proper person to conduct the expedition : and at that gentleman's recommendation, backed by Sir Hugh Palliser, he was selected for this purpose, and raised to the rank of Lieutenant. He sailed from Plymouth, August 23, 1768, in the Endeavour, of three hundred and seventy tons, accompanied by Mr. Green as astronomer, and by Mr. Banks. Passing round Cape Horn, they anchored, April 11, 1769, at Otaheite, or Tahiti, as it is named by the latest visitors, which had been discovered by Captain Wallis, and was now selected as a proper place to observe the transit. As it was necessary to remain some time on the island, and highly expedient to be on good terms with the natives, Lieutenant Cook used much precaution to place the traffic between them and the strangers on an equitable footing ; and to prevent the wanton injuries which the sense of superior power, and an unjust contempt, too often induce Europeans to inflict upon the rude inhabitants of newly-discovered regions. And we may here mention, as one of the good points of Cook's character, that he always showed a scrupulous regard to the rights of property, taking no articles from the natives except on fair terms of gift or barter ; and that he had a tender regard for human life, not only avoiding to use our deadly weapons, as discoverers have too often done, in revenge for petty depredations, harmless insults, and contemptible attacks, but even restraining a natural curiosity, where the indulgence of it seemed likely to shock prejudices, or to lead to collision and bloodshed. The inhabitants of Otaheite are a gentle race, and no serious misunderstandings occurred between them and their visitors. The transit was satisfactorily observed June 3 ; and, July 13, the Endeavour resumed her voyage, pursuant to Cook's instructions, which were to prosecute his discoveries in the Southern Ocean, after the astronomical purposes of the expedition had been

fulfilled. He cruised a month among the then unknown group of the Society Islands, and afterwards proceeded in search of the Terra Australis, the great southern continent, so long supposed by geographers to exist, as a necessary counterpoise to the extensive continents of the northern hemisphere. Land was seen October 6, displaying lofty ranges of mountains; and it was generally supposed that the long wished for discovery was made. It proved, however, to be New Zealand, unvisited by Europeans since Tasman first approached its shores, in 1642. Cook spent six months in circumnavigating this country, and ascertained that it consisted of two large islands. March 31, 1770, he commenced his voyage home. He directed his course along the eastern coast of New Holland, then quite unknown; laid down a chart of it through nearly its whole extent; and took every opportunity to increase our stock of knowledge in natural history, as well as geographical science. For more than 1300 miles he had safely navigated this most dangerous shore, where the sharp coral reefs rise like a wall to the surface of the water, when, on the night of June 10, the ship suddenly struck. She was found to be aground on a coral reef, which rose around her to within a few feet of the surface. Though lightened immediately by every possible means, two tides elapsed before she could be got off; and then with so much injury to her bottom, that she could only be kept afloat by working three pumps night and day. When the men were all but worn out by this labour, a midshipman suggested the expedient of *fothering* the ship, or passing a sail charged with oakum, and other loose materials, under her keel: which succeeded so well, that the leak was then kept under by a single pump; and the navigators proceeded in comparative security till the 14th, when a harbour was discovered, afterwards named Endeavour River, suitable for making the necessary repairs. It was then found that a large fragment of coral rock had stuck in the ship's bottom, so as in great measure to close the leak, which must otherwise have admitted a body of water sufficient to set the pumps at defiance. To this providential occurrence they owed their safety; for, had the ship foundered, the boats could not have contained the whole crew. Among many dangers, Cook pursued his course through that intricate tract of reefs and islands, which he named the Labyrinth, to the northern point of New Holland: and having now explored the whole eastern coast, from lat.  $38^{\circ}$  to  $10^{\circ} 30'$ , he took possession of it by the name of New South Wales. He then made sail for New Guinea, having proved that New Guinea and New Holland are separate islands, and from thence proceeded to Batavia, which he reached October 9. Here they obtained

refreshments and repaired the ship, which was found to be in a most perilous state : but these advantages were dearly bought by a sojourn in that pestilential place. Seven persons died at Batavia, and twenty-three more during the voyage to the Cape. June 12, 1771, the Endeavour dropped anchor in the Downs, and terminated her long and adventurous voyage.

The manner in which Lieutenant Cook had performed his task gave perfect satisfaction, and he was promoted to the rank of Commander. The public curiosity was strongly roused to know the particulars of his adventures ; and it was gratified by an account of the several expeditions to the Southern Ocean, commanded by Byron, Wallis, and Cook, composed by Dr. Hawkesworth from the original materials, and illustrated by charts and plates, engraved at the expense of Government. Cook communicated to the Royal Society an ‘ Account of the flowing of the Tides in the South Sea,’ published in their Transactions, vol. lxii. His voyage had proved two things : first, that neither New Zealand or New Holland were parts of the great southern continent, supposing it to exist ; secondly, that no such continent could exist to the northward of  $40^{\circ}$  S. lat. He had not, however, ascertained its non-existence in higher latitudes, nor did it enter into his commission to do so. Now, however, it was resolved to send out a second expedition, to ascertain this point, under the command of him who had so ably conducted the former one. Two ships were fitted out with every thing conducive to the health and comfort of the voyagers : the Resolution, of four hundred and sixty tons, and a smaller vessel, the Adventure, Captain Furneaux ; which, however, was separated from her consort early in the second year of the voyage. They sailed from Plymouth, July 13, 1772. Captain Cook’s instructions were, to circumnavigate the globe in high southern latitudes, prosecuting his discoveries as near to the South Pole as possible, using every exertion to fall in with the supposed continent, or any islands which might exist in those unknown seas ; and endeavouring, by all proper means, to cultivate a friendship and alliance with the inhabitants. The expedition left the Cape of Good Hope Nov. 22, and cruised, for near four months, between the Cape and New Zealand, from E. long.  $20^{\circ}$  to  $170^{\circ}$ , their extreme point to the southward being lat.  $67^{\circ} 15'$ . Having satisfied himself that no land of great extent could exist between these longitudes, to the northward of  $60^{\circ}$  S. lat., Cook made sail for New Zealand, to refresh his crew, and reached it March 26, 1773. The winter months, corresponding to our midsummer, he spent at the Society Islands ; and returning to New Zealand, he again sailed,

November 26, in quest of a southern continent, inclining his course to the east. He first fell in with ice in lat.  $62^{\circ} 10'$ , W. long.  $172^{\circ}$ , and continued to steer S.E. to lat.  $67^{\circ} 31'$ , W. long.  $142^{\circ} 54'$ , when, finding it impossible at that time to get farther south, he returned northwards, as far as lat.  $50^{\circ}$ , that he might be certain that no extensive country had been left in that direction. January 6, 1774, he again shaped his course southward, and on the 30th reached his extreme point of southing, lat.  $71^{\circ} 10'$ , W. long.  $106^{\circ} 54'$ . Here he was stopped by ice, which it was the general opinion might extend to the Pole, or join some land to which it had been fixed from the earliest time. Returning northwards, during the winter months he traversed nearly the whole extent of the Pacific Ocean between the tropics, visiting Easter Island, the Marquesas, the Society and Friendly Islands, the New Hebrides, and another island, the largest yet discovered in the Pacific, except those of New Zealand, which he called New Caledonia. He then returned to New Zealand, and having passed three weeks in friendly intercourse with the natives, took his departure, November 10. Having cruised in various latitudes between  $43^{\circ}$  and  $56^{\circ}$ , a portion of the ocean which he had not yet explored, and being in W. long.  $138^{\circ} 56'$ , he determined to steer direct for the western entrance of the Straits of Magellan, and thence, along Tierra del Fuego, to the Straits of Le Maire. December 29 he passed Cape Horn, and re-entered the Atlantic Ocean, and standing southward, discovered Sandwich Land, a desolate coast, the extreme point of which he named the Southern Thule, lat.  $59^{\circ} 13'$ , as the most southern land that had then been discovered. Later navigators have found land nearer to the Pole. "I concluded," Captain Cook observes, "that Sandwich Land was either a group of islands, or else a point of the continent, for I firmly believe that there is a tract of land near the Pole, which is the source of most of the ice which is spread over this vast southern ocean. I also think it probable that it extends farthest to the north, opposite the Southern Atlantic and Indian Oceans, because ice was always found by us farther to the north in these oceans than any where else." Having now encompassed the globe in a high latitude, and thinking it impossible to prosecute further researches in those tempestuous seas with a worn-out ship, and nearly exhausted provisions, Cook made sail for the Cape; and arrived there March 22, 1774, having sailed 20,000 leagues since he had left it, without so much injury to the ship as springing a mast or yard. July 30 he anchored at Spithead.

He was received in England with high applause, posted, and made a Captain of Greenwich Hospital. On this occasion he published his

own Journal, illustrated by maps and engravings ; and the composition, unpretending, but clear and manly, does honour to one whose education had been so rude. Being elected Fellow of the Royal Society, he contributed two papers to their Transactions, published in vol. lxvi., one relating to the tides in the South Seas, the other containing an account of the methods which he had taken to preserve the health of his ship's crew. The ravages of scurvy are now so much checked, that few know from experience how dreadfully earlier navigators suffered from that disease. It is one of Cook's peculiar merits, that he attended to the health of his seamen with such eminent success, that during this long and painful voyage, not one man died of scurvy. Four only died, out of a hundred and twelve persons on board the Resolution, and of these but one was carried off by disease. That this was, in a great degree, the merit of the Captain, is proved by the Adventure having suffered much more, though fitted out exactly in the same way. Sailors usually dislike changes in their mode of life ; and it required judgment and perseverance to induce them to adopt a healthy regimen. Cook, however, succeeded in reconciling them to his innovations ; of the utility of which they were perfectly convinced, long before the end of the voyage. The means which he used will be found fully detailed in his paper, which was honoured by the Society with the gold medal : those on which he chiefly relied were a large supply of antiscorbutic stores, as malt, sour krout, and portable broth ; the enforcement of a vegetable diet, whenever vegetables could be procured ; and great care not to expose the crew unnecessarily to the weather, and to keep their persons, their clothes, and their berths, clean, dry, and well aired. Cook was justly proud of his success in this respect, and he closed the account of his second voyage with words which show the humanity and modesty of his temper. “ Whatever may be the public judgment about other matters, it is with real satisfaction, and without claiming any other merit but that of attention to my duty, that I can conclude this account with an observation, which facts enable me to make, that our having discovered the possibility of preserving health among a numerous ship's company for such a length of time, in such varieties of climate, and amid such continued hardships and fatigues, will make this voyage remarkable, in the opinion of every benevolent person, when the disputes about the southern continent shall have ceased to engage the attention and to divide the judgment of philosophers.”

Another geographical question, of still greater interest, engaged the attention of the nation at this time ; the practicability of a north-east

passage to China and the Indies. During Cook's absence, one expedition had been sent out, under Captain Phipps; it was now determined to send out a second, reversing the usual order, and trying to find a passage from the Pacific into the Atlantic Ocean. Cook volunteered to quit his well-earned repose, and take the direction of this enterprise; and the offer was gladly accepted. He was directed to proceed, by the Cape of Good Hope, to New Zealand, thence through the chain of islands scattered along the tropics, which he had already visited. This done, he was to proceed northward, with all dispatch, to the latitude of  $65^{\circ}$ , and to direct his attention to the discovery of a passage into the Atlantic; and by the extension of an existing Act of Parliament, the ship's company, if successful, were entitled to a reward of £20,000. With a most praiseworthy benevolence, the ships were charged with cattle, sheep, and other useful animals, to be left, and naturalized, if possible, in New Zealand, Otaheite, and other islands. The Resolution and Discovery were fitted out for the voyage, with every attention to the health and comfort of their crews. They sailed from Plymouth July 12, 1776, and touching at New Zealand, reached the Friendly Islands so late in the spring of 1777, that Captain Cook thought it impossible to visit the Polar Seas to any purpose that year. He therefore spent the whole summer in this part of the ocean, where fresh provisions were abundant; and his men were relieved from the hardships and sicknesses commonly incident to a long voyage, while, at the same time, the ship's stores were economized. He remained therefore near three months among the Friendly Islands, using all means of adding to the geographical knowledge of this intricate archipelago, and acquiring information relative to the natural history of the country, and the manners of the inhabitants, with whom an uninterrupted friendship was maintained. July 17, Cook pursued his course to the Society Islands. Both here and at the Friendly Islands, especially at Otaheite, he left a number of European animals; and the prudence, as well as benevolence, of this conduct, is evinced by the valuable supplies which whalers and other navigators of the southern seas have since drawn from them. Early in December he took a final leave of these regions; and, January 18, 1778, came in sight of an unknown group, to which he gave the name of Sandwich Islands. March 7, the west coast of North America was seen; and after spending a month in executing necessary repairs in Nootka Sound, the voyagers advanced to the Aleutian Islands, and up Behring's Strait. Here Cook ascertained the continents of Asia and America to be only thirteen leagues apart; and laid down the position of the most westerly point of America,

just without the Arctic Circle, which he named Cape Prince of Wales. August 18 he reached lat.  $70^{\circ} 44'$ , W. long. about  $162^{\circ}$ , his extreme point, and continued to traverse those frozen regions till August 29, when, the ice being daily increasing, it was time to seek a more genial climate. But before proceeding to the south, he employed some time in examining the coasts of Asia and America, and found reason to admire the correctness of Behring, the discoverer of the strait which bears that name. He passed the winter at the Sandwich Islands, intending to return northward early enough to reach Kamtschatka by the middle of May in the ensuing year.

During this second visit was discovered the island of Owhyhee, the largest and most important of the group, at which the strangers were received with unusual generosity and confidence. Near ten weeks were spent in sailing round it, without any serious disagreement arising with the natives ; and Cook ceased to regret that he had as yet failed in meeting with a northern passage home. It is remarkable that his Journal concludes with the following words : “ To this disappointment we owed our having it in our power to revisit the Sandwich Islands, and to enrich our voyage with a discovery, which though the last, seemed in many respects to be the most important that had hitherto been made by Europeans, throughout the extent of the Pacific Ocean.”

This island, which he had rejoiced so much to see, was the spot where our great navigator’s life was prematurely closed. We have the testimony of an eye-witness to his own belief, that no premeditated and treacherous assault had been planned ; but that the fatal affray was one of those accidents which human foresight cannot always prevent. The natives of these, as of all the South Sea Islands, were much addicted to stealing the new and tempting articles presented to their view ; a fault for which Captain Cook, with the benevolence usually displayed in his dealings with them, has offered a charitable and sensible apology. But on the night of February 13, one of the ship’s boats was stolen. To recover this was a matter of importance ; and Cook went on shore, guarded only by a small number of marines, hoping by amicable means to gain possession of the person of the king of the district, which he had always found the most effectual method of regaining stolen articles. The king consented to go on board the Resolution ; but a crowd collected, and indications of alarm and hostility gradually increased, until blows were made at Captain Cook, and he was obliged to fire in self-defence. A shower of stones was then discharged at the marines, who returned it with a volley, and

this drew on the fire of the boats' crews. Cook turned round to stop the firing, and order the boats to come close in to shore; but a rush had been made on the marines as soon as their muskets were discharged, and they were driven into the water, where four were killed, the rest escaping to the boats. Cook was the last person left on shore; and he was making for the pinnace, when an Indian came behind him and struck him with a club. He sunk on one knee, and as he rose was stabbed by another Indian in the neck. He fell into shallow water within five or six yards of one of the boats; but there all was confusion, and no united effort was made to save him. He struggled vigorously, but was overcome by numbers; and at last was struck down, not to rise again. His body, with the other slain, was abandoned to the natives, and though every exertion was subsequently made, nothing more than the bones, and not all of them, were recovered. These were committed to the deep with military honours; honoured more highly by the unfeigned sorrow of those who sailed under his command.

Captain Clerke, of the Discovery, succeeded to the command of the expedition, and returned in the ensuing summer to the Polar Seas; but he was unable to advance so far as in the former year. The chief object of the voyage therefore failed. The ships returned along the coast of Kamtschatka to Japan and China, and reached England in October, 1780. Captain Clerke died of consumption in his second visit to the Polar Seas, and Lieutenant King succeeded to the Discovery, whose name is honourably associated with that of his great commander, in consequence of his having continued the account of the voyage, from the period at which Cook's Journal ends. He has borne testimony to Cook's virtues in the following terms:—

"The constitution of his body was robust, inured to labour, and capable of undergoing the severest hardships. His stomach bore without difficulty the coarsest and most ungrateful food. Great was the indifference with which he submitted to every kind of self-denial. The qualities of his mind were of the same hardy, vigorous kind with those of his body. His understanding was strong and perspicacious. His judgment, in whatever related to the services he was engaged in, quick and sure. His designs were bold and manly; and both in the conception, and in the mode of execution, bore evident marks of a great original genius. His courage was cool and determined, and accompanied with an admirable presence of mind in the moment of danger. His temper might, perhaps, have been justly blamed as subject to hasty-ness and passion, had not these been disarmed by a disposition the most

benevolent and humane. Such were the outlines of Captain Cook's character; but its most distinguishing feature was that unremitting perseverance in the pursuit of his object, which was not only superior to the opposition of dangers, and the pressure of hardships, but even exempt from the want of ordinary relaxation. During the long and tedious voyages in which he was engaged, his eagerness and activity were never in the least abated. No incidental temptation could detain him for a moment: even those intervals of recreation which sometimes unavoidably occurred, and were looked for by us with a longing, that persons who have experienced the fatigues of service will readily excuse, were submitted to by him with a certain impatience, whenever they could not be employed in making a farther provision for the more effectual prosecution of his designs."

The life of Captain Cook is, in effect, the history of his voyages, and will best be found in the accounts of those works. But the memoir by Dr. Kippis, the whole of which is printed in the *Biographia Britannica*, is more adapted for general use. Samwell's *Narrative of the Death of Captain Cook* contains the fullest account of that lamentable event.

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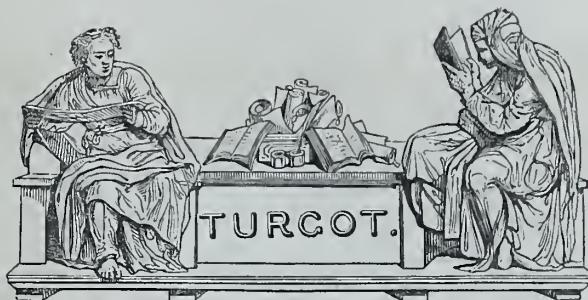
Engraving

## TOUR GOT

*From an original Picture in the  
Gallery of the Louvre*

Printed by the order and decree of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge

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ANNE ROBERT JAMES TURGOT was born at Paris May 10, 1727. He was descended from one of the oldest and most noble families of Normandy.

Turgot's childhood was passed under the superintendence of an injudicious mother, whose affection for her son seems to have been much lessened in consequence of his shy and awkward manners before strangers. His father, on the contrary, was a man of sense and humanity. He was Provost of the Corporation of Merchants, an office which he long filled with deserved popularity. He lived till 1750, and by his example as well as by his precepts exerted no small influence over the character of his son. If Turgot's reserved and silent manners are to be attributed to the one parent, the uprightness, benevolence, and boldness of his conduct may perhaps in an equal degree be ascribed to the other. At an early age he was sent to the school of Louis le Grand, where he had little opportunity of making progress; for the master though a kind-hearted man, was not in other respects peculiarly qualified for his station. He afterwards went to the school of Plessis. Here he was more fortunate in meeting with two professors of superior abilities, Guérin and Sigorgne; the latter honourably distinguished as being the first member of the universities of France, who introduced the Newtonian philosophy into the schools. Under their tuition, assisted by his own unremitting assiduity, Turgot advanced rapidly, and the pupil soon acquired the respect and friendship of his teachers.

It was the custom in France, during the period of Turgot's boyhood, that parents should decide upon the profession to which their children should be educated, even from the cradle; little voice in this most important question being allowed to those who were most deeply interested in it. Turgot was the youngest of three sons; of whom

the eldest was destined to the magistracy, the second to the army, the third, the subject of this memoir, was set apart for the church. The premature determination of his parents seemed amply justified as his character was gradually developed. Great simplicity of manner, pensiveness of mind, extreme diffidence and reserve, a distaste to dissipation of any kind, habits of intense application, and an ardent love of knowledge, were his prominent qualities, and well suited to the ecclesiastical life. Nevertheless he had hardly reached the age of reflection, and become capable of appreciating the objects of ambition, which, from the political consideration in which his family was held, he might reasonably aspire to, before he resolved to sacrifice all to an unfettered conscience; and to follow that path in which he thought he could be most useful to his fellow-citizens and mankind. Deeply impressed however with a sense of what was due to the feelings of his parents, he waited till a favourable opportunity should occur to disclose his secret determination ; and was in the mean time, at the age of twenty-one, admitted to the establishment of the Sorbonne, as a student of theology. Here he remained two years ; prosecuting his studies with vigour, but without confining them to a profession which he had resolved not to follow. Nothing seemed too vast to discourage him, or too trifling to escape his notice. Mathematics and natural philosophy, metaphysics, logic, morals, legislation and law; history, belles lettres, poetry, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, together with most of the modern languages, entered into the comprehensive catalogue of his pursuits. So great an activity of mind, joined to a memory so retentive that he could repeat two hundred lines of verse after hearing them read twice, and sometimes only once, stored his mind with an extent and variety of knowledge unusual at his, or indeed at any age. After taking his degree, and being elected Prior of the establishment, he could no longer conceal his intention of relinquishing the profession of the church. His friends and associates, amongst others the Abbés Bon, Morellet, and de Brienne, remonstrated with him in vain on his determination. "Follow the advice," he replied, "which you offer, since you are able to do so: for my own part, it is impossible for me to wear a mask all my life."

He had determined to pursue his fortune in the civil service of the state ; and his father's death obviated the difficulties which might have embarrassed him in carrying his resolution into effect. He obtained the office of Procureur du Roi as a first step in his new career, and soon after that of Master of Requests. In this situation he had to make several reports, and to deliver them *vivâ voce* before

the King. Aware of his extreme diffidence, he resolved to counteract it by writing out and revising his speech with great attention. He did so; nothing was omitted, and yet the subject was summed up with such severe conciseness as greatly to fatigue the patience of his hearers. Some of them, complimenting him on his performance, at the same time criticised its length. "The next time," they added, "try to abridge what you have to say." Turgot, who knew that it was impossible to have abridged more, learnt by this remark that he had abridged too much; and on the next occasion, profiting by his singularly acquired knowledge, he developed his facts at length, repeated his arguments, and recapitulated all that he had urged; and in doing so, fixed without fatiguing the attention of his audience. When he had finished, the same friends, as he expected, congratulated him warmly on having corrected his former defect, saying, "This time you have told us a great deal and you have been very brief."

In 1761 he was made Intendant of Limoges; and on his appointment Voltaire wrote to him, saying, "I have lately learnt from one of your colleagues that an Intendant can do nothing but mischief: you, I trust, will prove that he can do much good." These anticipations were fully realized. The inhabitants of his province, overburthened at all times by the oppressive imposts of the *Taille*, the *Corvée*, and the *Militia* service, were then suffering under the added pressure of three successive years of scarcity. The *Taille* was in the nature of a land-tax: which fell upon the landlords in those parts of the country which were cultivated by farmers; but principally upon the labourers themselves, wherever the *Métayer* system was in force, as in Limousin. A more equal distribution of this tax, and an improved method of collection, relieved the peasant from the great injustice of the burden. The *Corvée* was an obligation to furnish labour in kind, twice every year, for the construction and repair of public roads; for which the peasantry received no remuneration. Turgot proposed that this task should for the future be executed by hired labourers, whose wages were to be paid by a rate levied upon the districts adjacent to the road. The evils of the *Militia* service were obviated in a similar way; and the people who had received their new Intendant with suspicion, as only a new specimen of their former oppressors, now looked upon him as a benefactor and a friend. Nevertheless his popularity could not overcome all prejudices; and when he endeavoured to mitigate the evils occasioned by the late scarcity, by introducing a free traffic in grain, both the magistrates and the peasantry did all in their power to counteract his wise and bene-

volent exertions. In spite of his new regulations, supported by a clear explanation of the grounds upon which they rested, the land-owners and corn-merchants could not transport their grain to those places where the price was highest, the want therefore most urgent, and the supply most beneficial, without exposing their persons to insults, and their property to the pillage of the people, as well as to the local taxes imposed by the magistrates. Turgot lost no time in addressing a circular to the proper officers, in which he urged them, by the pleas both of reason and authority, to put in force the laws, and check the popular irritation. He showed that the difference of weather often produces an abundant harvest in some districts, and a deficient one in others; and that the only effectual way of relieving the necessary distress in the latter, is to permit the free transport of the surplus produce of the former: that if one town were to arrogate the right of prohibiting the transit or export of grain, other towns would justly pretend to the same privilege; and that what might be felt as a benefit to the inhabitants of one spot in a year of external scarcity, would be deprecated by the same persons as a curse in a year of internal famine. The clearness and conciliatory tone with which the principle of the freedom of trade was laid down, produced the desired effect; and the writer had the satisfaction of seeing the wants of the people supplied, without recurring to the demoralizing expedient of indiscriminate charity.

Soon after the success of this experiment, the Minister of Finance consulted the Intendants of the kingdom upon the laws relating to the commerce of grain. Turgot wrote seven letters in answer, in which he developed at length his views on the subject of free trade; and not long after he composed an essay on the Formation of Wealth, which, as his celebrated biographer Condorcet observes, may be considered as the germ of Smith's Wealth of Nations.

These unremitting exertions, joined to views so just and at that time so original, attracted the attention of the public; and on the death of Louis XV. Turgot was called to the first offices of the state, as the only man who seemed likely to restore the failing credit of the nation, do justice to the people, and prevent those political troubles which did in fact ensue, and ended in confiscation and bloodshed. He undertook the difficult task with cheerfulness, but not without some misgivings. The aristocracy and the court could not long remain favourable to a minister who would not cater to their luxuries; the clergy naturally viewed with suspicion one who was devoted to the most rigid economy; public opinion was not sufficiently advanced to appreciate the measures of a statesman whose genius far surpassed the knowledge of his day;

and even if it had been more enlightened, it had not the means of expressing itself powerfully and almost simultaneously as in England. Turgot therefore had no support to rely on but that of the King; but while the monarch remained firm, there was still a hope that the statesman might accomplish his objects. After filling the post of Minister of Marine for one month, he was raised to the office of Minister of Finance, August 24, 1774. Nothing could be more encouraging to him than his first audience of the King; it was more like the confidential intercourse of two friends considering in truth and sincerity the best means of promoting the happiness of their common country, than a cold and formal state conference. Turgot, with the permission of his sovereign, recapitulated what had occurred at this meeting, in a letter which is above all praise. In it he enforced the absolute necessity of the most rigid economy, in order to prevent a national bankruptcy, any increase of taxes, or any new loans. "No bankruptcy, either avowed, or disguised under compulsory reductions. No increase of taxes. The reason your Majesty will find in the situation of your people, and still more in your own heart. No new loans; for every loan, by diminishing the free revenue, necessarily leads at last to a bankruptcy or an increase of taxes." The means by which he proposed to bring about these ends were the most rigid retrenchments. "But," he adds, "it is asked, in what is the retrenchment to be made? and every department will maintain that as far as relates to itself there is scarcely a single expense which is not indispensable. The reasons alleged may be very good; but as there can be none for performing impossibilities, all these reasons must give way to the irresistible necessity of economy. Your Majesty knows that one of the greatest obstacles to economy is the multitude of solicitations to which you are perpetually exposed. Your benevolence, Sir, must be the shield against your bounty. Consider whence the money distributed amongst your courtiers is drawn; and contrast the misery of those from whom it is sometimes necessary to wrest it by the most rigorous measures, with the situation of those who have the best title to your liberality." Such a course was sure to raise up enemies on every side. He anticipates the calumnies which will be heaped upon him; he points them out to the King, and then reminds him, "It is upon the faith of your Majesty's promises that I take upon myself a burthen which is perhaps heavier than I can bear; it is to yourself personally, to the honest, the just, and the good man, rather than to the King, that I devote myself."

From this letter it might be supposed by those who are not

acquainted with all Turgot's principles, that his first step would be to stop the payment to every useless pensioner upon the state, and abrogate every local tax which had been unjustly levied by individuals in times of anarchy and oppression. But he respected the right of property; and the more so, because he understood its full extent. Every unjust impost was indeed taken off, and every monopoly destroyed; but not without first giving to the possessors an indemnification equal to their loss: and two years' arrears of pensions, which had been stopped for three years previous to his entering upon office, were punctually discharged without loss of time where the amount was small, and the creditor therefore in all probability not in affluent circumstances; whilst the payment of the remaining ones was accelerated as much as possible. It was not therefore by injustice that he endeavoured to relieve the people, but by enabling them more easily to bear their burdens. The faithful discharge of all claims upon the state, restored the credit of the country; the destruction of monopolies, and of restrictions upon commerce and manufactures, increased the wealth of the people, and thus rendered comparatively light an amount of taxation which was before most burdensome. Thus, his first regulations established a free trade in corn throughout the kingdom, and took away the exclusive privileges of bakers, the obligation to grind corn at particular mills, and several market dues upon corn when sold. A similar edict permitted the free circulation of wine; and brandy, cider, and perry were meant to have been subsequently included in this law. The manufacturers of France were also freed from the absurd and vexatious regulations which prescribed the size of different stuffs, and the method of making and dying them, under severe penalties and even corporal punishments; and ingenuity was allowed to exert itself according to the taste and demand of the public. Glass, powder, saltpetre, nitre, oil of poppies, and many other articles, were either freed on the one hand from the exclusive privileges in their manufacture, which enhanced their price and interfered with their quality; or on the other, from restrictions upon their free transport through the kingdom, which prevented the manufacturer from obtaining the best price for his goods.

These changes were brought about in little more than a year and a half, during which his labours were interrupted by attacks of illness, and by two events which could not be averted or foreseen. The first of these was a contagious disorder which broke out among the cattle of Guienne, and spread far and wide, until the salutary measures taken by Turgot arrested the evil: the other was more serious,

and required all the decision and courage of the minister for its suppression. The season had been unfavourable ; and in times of scarcity the people had been accustomed to vent their fury against the corn-merchants, whom the government often weakly abandoned. A repetition of these scenes was approaching. A few riots in the provincial towns were soon quelled, but a heavier storm impended over the capital. A band of lawless insurgents, after plundering the corn-markets upon the Seine and Oise, entered Paris, rifled many bakers' shops, and endeavoured to excite the people to outrage and violence. The powers of government seemed paralysed. The superintendents of the police were frightened and inactive ; and the parliament published a proclamation, promising that the King should be petitioned for a reduction in the price of bread. Turgot lost no time in sending troops to the disturbed district, who soon dispersed the pillagers ; the superintendents of the police were immediately dismissed from office ; and government proclamations were posted over those of the parliament during the very night in which the latter were issued, prohibiting the assembling of the people on pain of death. These energetic and salutary measures soon restored tranquillity and confidence ; the property of the merchants was respected ; and the price of provisions found the lowest level which the nature of the case would admit of. A month after, the King in passing through a district in which these riots had prevailed, was cheered by subjects who blessed his government. “ It is Turgot and I alone who love the people,” was the expression which fell from his lips ; and the sentence was repeated and confirmed by a nation’s voice. In spite, however, of Turgot’s indefatigable and honest exertions in the cause of his country, his dismissal from office was soon demanded. The privileged orders insisted upon remaining exempt from the payment of the taxes ; the court parasites upheld the necessity of sinecures and pensions ; all who lived upon the resources of the country without serving it, united in denouncing a minister who was the friend of the people and of justice ; nor had the clergy any sympathy with one who laid down the most comprehensive principles of toleration. The King had the culpable weakness of yielding to this dishonest clamour. He sacrificed his minister, and not many years after died himself upon the scaffold ; that scaffold which was destined to reek with the blood of his family, his friends, and his subjects.

Turgot had been in office only twenty months, but during that time he had prepared the way for a new era of extensive happiness and prosperity for his fellow-countrymen. A friend reproached him one

day with being too precipitate. “How can you say so,” he replied, “you who know so well the pressing wants of the people, and are aware that none of my family survive the gout beyond the age of fifty.” His prediction was but too nearly fulfilled; he died of this hereditary disease a few years afterwards, March 20, 1781, in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

During the interval between his retiring from office, and his death, Turgot devoted himself to literary and scientific pursuits. His works are contained in nine volumes octavo, 1808–11; they are composed principally of state papers connected with his administration, of some articles written for the *Encyclopédie*, and a few translations from classical and modern literature.

Turgot was a great and a good man; endowed with depth and originality of thought, he discovered and acted upon sound principles of political economy, before the science had been even dignified with a name; and whilst his predecessors in office were ever seeking for temporary expedients to increase the revenue of the state by the oppression of the people, he first endeavoured to unite the interests of both. Mild and conciliating in his manners, just and benevolent in all his views, he was the firm and uncompromising opponent of every species of injustice. He was ambitious, but his ambition was of the highest order. He despised the tinsel grandeur of office, the smiles of courtiers, or even the applause of the multitude; but he courted the means of doing good to mankind, and his reward has been the esteem of discerning friends and the applause of a later and a more enlightened age.

A disquisition on the life and opinions of Turgot, by Dupont de Nemours, is prefixed to the edition of his works which we have already mentioned. His life, written by Condorcet, is one of the best specimens of biography in any language. Lacreteille’s ‘*Histoire du dix-huitième Siècle*’ contains a short sketch of his ministry, well deserving attention: and several interesting details of his character are to be found in the Memoirs of the Abbé Morellet.

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Engraving by W. F.

## PETER THE GREAT

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AT the close of the sixteenth century, the dominions of Russia, or Muscovy, as it was then more generally called, were far thrown back from the more civilized nations of southern Europe, by the intervention of Lithuania, Livonia, and other provinces now incorporated in the Russian empire, but then belonging either to Sweden or Poland. The Czar of Muscovy therefore possessed no political weight in the affairs of Europe; and little intercourse existed between the Court of Moscow and the more polished potentates whom it affected to despise as barbarians, even for some time after the accession of the reigning dynasty, the house of Romanof, in 1613, and the establishment of a more regular government than had previously been known. We only read occasionally of embassies being sent to Moscow, in general for the purpose of arranging commercial relations. From this state of insignificance, Peter, the first Emperor of Russia, raised his country, by introducing into it the arts of peace, by establishing a well organized and disciplined army in the place of a lawless body of tumultuous mutineers, by creating a navy, where scarce a merchant vessel existed before, and, as the natural result of these changes, by important conquests on both the Asiatic and European frontiers of his hereditary dominions. For these services his countrymen bestowed on him, yet living, the title of Great: and it is well deserved, whether we look to the magnitude of those services, the difficulty of carrying into effect his benevolent designs, which included nothing less than the remodelling a whole people, or the grasp of mind, and the iron energy of will, which was necessary to conceive such projects, and to overcome the difficulties which beset them. It will not vitiate his claim to

the epithet, that his manners were coarse and boisterous, his amusements often ludicrous and revolting to a polished taste : if that claim be questionable, it is because he who aspired to be the reformer of others, was unable to control the violence of his own passions.

The Czar Alexis, Peter's father, was actuated by somewhat of the spirit which so distinguished the son. He endeavoured to introduce the European discipline into his armies ; he had it much at heart to turn the attention of the Russians to maritime pursuits ; and he added the fine provinces of Plescow and Smolensko to his paternal dominions. At the death of Alexis, in 1677, Peter was but five years old. His eldest brother Theodore succeeded to the throne. Theodore died after a reign of five years, and named Peter his successor. We pass in silence over the intrigues and insurrections which troubled the young Czar's minority. It was not until the close of the year 1689, in the eighteenth year of his age, that he finally shook off the trammels of an ambitious sister, and assumed in reality, as well as in name, the direction of the state. How he had been qualified for this task by education does not clearly appear ; but even setting aside the stories which attribute to his sister the detestable design of leading him into all sorts of excess, and especially drunkenness, with the hope of ruining both his constitution and intellect, it is probable that no pains whatever had been taken to form his intellect or manners for the station which he was to occupy. One of the few anecdotes told of his early life is, that being struck by the appearance of a boat on the river Yausa, which runs through Moscow, which he noticed to be of different construction from the flat-bottomed vessels commonly in use, he was led to inquire into the method of navigating it. It had been built for the Czar Alexis by a Dutchman, who was still in Moscow. He was immediately sent for : he rigged and repaired the boat ; and under his guidance the young prince learnt how to sail her, and soon grew passionately fond of his new amusement. He had five small vessels built at Plescow, on the lake Peipus ; and not satisfied with this fresh-water navigation, hired a ship at Archangel, in which he made a voyage to the coast of Lapland. In these expeditions his love of sailing was nourished into a passion which lasted through life. He prided himself upon his practical skill as a seaman ; and both at this time and afterwards exposed himself and his friends to no small hazard by his rashness in following this favourite pursuit.

The first serious object of Peter's attention was to reform the army. In this he was materially assisted by a Swiss gentleman named Lefort ; at whose suggestion he raised a company of fifty men, who

were clothed and disciplined in the European manner ; the Russian army at that time being little better than a tribe of Tartars. As soon as the little corps was formed, Peter caused himself to be enrolled in it as a private soldier. It is a remarkable trait in the character of the man, that he thought no condescension degrading, which forwarded any of his ends. In the army he entered himself in the lowest rank, and performed successively the duties of every other : in the navy he went still further, for he insisted on performing the menial duties of the lowest cabin-boy, rising step by step, till he was qualified to rate as an able seaman. Nor was this done merely for the sake of singularity ; he had resolved that every officer of the sea or land service should enter in the lowest rank of his profession, that he might obtain a practical knowledge of every task or manœuvre which it was his duty to see properly executed : and he felt that his nobility might scarcely be brought to submit to what in their eyes would be a degradation, except by the personal example of the Czar himself. By the help of Lefort and some veteran officers, several of whom, and those the objects of his especial confidence, were Scotchmen, he was enabled in a short time to command the services of a large body of disciplined troops, composed, one corps principally of foreigners, another of natives. Meanwhile he had not been negligent of the other arm of war ; for a number of Dutch and Venetian workmen were employed in building gun-boats and small ships of war at Voronitz, on the river Don, intended to secure the command of the sea of Asof, and to assist in capturing the strong town of Asof, then held by the Turks. The possession of this place was of great importance, from its situation at the mouth of the Don, commanding access to the Mediterranean seas. His first military attempts were accordingly directed against it, and he succeeded in taking it in 1696.

In the spring of the ensuing year, the empire being tranquil, and the young Czar's authority apparently established on a safe footing, he determined to travel into foreign countries, to view with his own eyes, and become personally and practically familiar with the arts and institutions of refined nations. There was a grotesqueness in his manner of executing this design, which has tended, more probably than even its real merit, to make it one of the common places of history. Every child knows how the Czar of Muscovy worked in the dock-yard of Saardam in Holland, as a common carpenter. In most men this would have been affectation ; and perhaps there was some tinge of that weakness in the earnestness with which Peter handled the axe, obeyed the officers of the dock-yard, and, in all points of outward man-

ners and appearance, put himself on a level with the shipwrights who were earning their daily bread. Most men too would have thought it unnecessary, that a prince, intent upon creating a navy, should learn the mere mechanical art of putting a ship together ; and that his time would have been better employed in studying the sciences connected with navigation, and the discipline and details of the naval service as established in the best schools. It seems, however, to have been the turn of Peter's mind always to begin at the beginning; a sound maxim, though here perhaps pushed beyond reasonable bounds. We have said, that he scrupulously went through the lowest services in the army and navy : probably he thought it as necessary that one who aimed at creating and directing a navy should not be ignorant of the practical art of ship-building, as that a general should be capable of performing himself the movements which he directs the private to execute. And his abode and occupations in Holland formed only part of an extensive plan. On quitting Russia he sent sixty young Russians to Venice and Leghorn to learn ship-building and navigation, and especially the construction and management of the large galleys moved by oars, which were so much used by the Venetian republic. Others he sent into Holland, with similar instructions ; others into Germany, to study the art of war, and make themselves well acquainted with the discipline and tactics of the German troops. So that while his personal labour at Saardam may have been stimulated in part by affectation of singularity, in part perhaps by a love of bodily exertion common in men of his busy and ardent temper, it would be unjust not to give him credit for higher motives ; such as the desire to become thoroughly acquainted with the art of ship-building, which he thought so important, and to set a good example of diligence to those whom he had sent out on a similar voyage of education.

Peter remained nine months in Holland, the greatest part of which he spent in the dock-yard of Saardam. He displayed unwearied zeal in seeking out and endeavouring to comprehend every thing of interest in science and art, especially in visiting manufactories. In January, 1698, he sailed for London in an English man-of-war, sent out expressly to bring him over. His chief object was to perfect himself in the higher branches of ship-building. With this view he occupied Mr. Evelyn's house, adjoining the dock-yard of Deptford ; and there remain in that gentleman's journal some curious notices of the manners of the Czar and his household, which were of the least refined description. During his stay he showed the same earnestness in inquiring into all things connected with the maritime and commercial

greatness of the country, as before in Holland ; and he took away near five hundred persons in his suite, consisting of naval captains, pilots, gunners, surgeons, and workmen in various trades, especially those connected with the naval service. In England, without assuming his rank, he ceased to wear the attire and adopt the habits of a common workman ; and he had frequent intercourse with William III., who is said to have conceived a strong liking for him, notwithstanding the uncouthness of his manners. Kneller painted a portrait of him for the King, said to be a good likeness, from which our print is engraved.

He left London in April, 1698, and proceeded to Vienna, principally to inspect the Austrian troops, then esteemed among the best in Europe. He had intended to visit Italy ; but his return was hastened by the tidings of a dangerous insurrection having broken out, which, though suppressed, seemed to render a longer absence from the seat of government inexpedient. The insurgents were chiefly composed of the Russian soldiery, abetted by a large party who thought every thing Russian good, and hated and dreaded the Czar's innovating temper. Of those who had taken up arms, many were slain in battle ; the rest, with many persons of more rank and consequence, suspected of being implicated in the revolt, were retained in prison until the Czar himself should decide their fate. Numerous stories of his extravagant cruelties on this occasion have been told, which may safely be passed over as unworthy of credit. It is certain, however, that considerable severity was shown. Many citizens who had not borne arms were condemned to death as instigators of the rebellion, and their frozen bodies exposed on the gibbets, or thrown by the way-side, remained throughout the winter, a fearful spectacle to passers by. In some accounts it is stated that two thousand of the soldiery were put to death : but the absurd falsehoods told of Peter's conduct on this occasion afford opportunity for a doubt, which we gladly entertain, whether justice was suffered to lead to such wholesale butchery. This insurrection led to the complete remodelling of the Russian army, on the same plan which had already been partially adopted.

During the year 1699 the Czar was chiefly occupied by civil reforms. According to his own account, as published in his journal, he regulated the press, caused translations to be published of various treatises on military and mechanical science, and history ; he founded a school for the navy ; others for the study of the Latin, German, and other languages ; he encouraged his subjects to cultivate foreign trade, which before they had absolutely been forbidden to do under pain of

death; he altered the Russian calendar, in which the year began on September 1, to agree in that point with the practice of other nations; he broke through the Oriental custom of not suffering women to mix in general society; and he paid sedulous attention to the improvement of his navy on the river Don. We have the testimony of Mr. Deane, an English ship-builder, that the Czar had turned his manual labours to good account, who states in a letter to England, that “the Czar has set up a ship of sixty guns, where he is both foreman and master builder; and, not to flatter him, I'll assure your Lordship, it will be the best ship among them, and it is all from his own draught: how he framed her together, and how he made the moulds, and in so short a time as he did, is really wonderful.”

He introduced an improved breed of sheep from Saxony and Silesia; despatched engineers to survey the different provinces of his extensive empire; sent persons skilled in metallurgy to the various districts in which mines were to be found; established manufactories of arms, tools, stuffs; and encouraged foreigners skilled in the useful arts to settle in Russia, and enrich it by the produce of their industry.

We cannot trace the progress of that protracted contest between Sweden and Russia, in which the short-lived greatness of Sweden was broken: we can only state the causes of the war, and the important results to which it led. Peter's principal motive for engaging in it was his leading wish to make Russia a maritime and commercial nation. To this end it was necessary that she should be possessed of ports, of which however she had none but Archangel and Asof, both most inconveniently situated, as well in respect of the Russian empire itself, as of the chief commercial nations of Europe. On the waters of the Baltic Russia did not possess a foot of coast. Both sides of the Baltic, both sides of the Gulf of Finland, the country between the head of that gulf and the lake Ladoga, including both sides of the river Neva, and the western side of lake Ladoga itself, and the northern end of lake Peipus, belonged to Sweden. In the year 1700, Charles XII. being but eighteen years of age, Denmark, Poland, and Russia, which had all of them suffered from the ambition of Sweden, formed a league to repair their losses, presuming on the weakness usually inherent in a minority. The object of Russia was the restoration of the provinces of Ingria, Carelia, and Wiborg, the country round the head of the Gulf of Finland, which formerly had belonged to her; that of Poland, was the recovery of Livonia and Esthonia, the greater part of which had been ceded by her to Charles XI. of Sweden. Denmark

was to obtain Holstein and Sleswick. But Denmark and Poland very soon withdrew, and left Russia to encounter Sweden single-handed. To this she was entirely unequal; her army, the bulk of it undisciplined, and even the disciplined part unpractised in the field, was no match for the veteran troops of Sweden, the terror of Germany. In the battle of Narva, a town on the river which runs out of the Peipus lake, fought November 30, 1700, nine thousand Swedes defeated signallly near forty thousand Russians, strongly intrenched and with a numerous artillery. Had Charles prosecuted his success with vigour, he might probably have delayed for many years the rise of Russia; but whether from contempt or mistake he devoted his whole attention to the war in Poland, and left the Czar at liberty to recruit and discipline his army, and improve the resources of his kingdom. In these labours he was most diligent. His troops, practised in frequent skirmishes with the Swedes quartered in Ingria and Livonia, rapidly improved, and on the celebrated field of Pultowa broke for ever the power of Charles XII. This decisive action did not take place until July 8, 1709. The interval was occupied by a series of small, but important additions to the Russian territory. In 1701-2, great part of Livonia and Ingria were subdued, including the banks of the Neva, where, on May 27, 1703, the city of St. Petersburg was founded. It was not till 1710 that the conquest of Courland, with the remainder of Livonia, including the important harbours of Riga and Revel, gave to Russia that free navigation of the Baltic sea which Peter had longed for as the greatest benefit which he could confer upon his country.

After the battle of Pultowa Charles fled to Turkey, where he continued for some years, shut out from his own dominions, and intent chiefly on spiriting the Porte to make war on Russia. In this he succeeded; but hostilities were terminated almost at their beginning, by the battle of the Pruth, fought July 20, 1711, in which the Russian army, not mustering more than forty thousand men, and surrounded by five times that number of Turks, owed its preservation to Catharine, first the mistress, at this time the wife, and finally the acknowledged partner and successor of Peter in the throne of Russia. By her coolness and prudence, while the Czar, exhausted by fatigue, anxiety, and self-reproach, was labouring under nervous convulsions, to which he was liable throughout life, a treaty was concluded with the Vizier in command of the Turkish army, by which the Russians preserved indeed life, liberty, and honour, but were obliged to resign Asof, to give up the forts and burn the vessels built to command the sea bearing that name, and to consent to other stipulations, which must have been very

bitter to the hitherto successful conqueror. Returning to the seat of government, his foreign policy for the next few years was directed to breaking down the power of Sweden, and securing his new metropolis by prosecuting his conquests on the northern side of the Gulf of Finland. Here he was entirely successful ; and the whole of Finland itself, and of the gulf, fell into his hands. These provinces were secured to Russia by the peace of Nieuwstadt, in 1721. Upon this occasion, the senate or state assembly of Russia requested him to assume the title of Emperor of all the Russias, with the adjuncts of Great, and Father of his Country.

Of the private history and character of Peter, we have hitherto said nothing. He was passionately fond of ardent spirits, and not only drank very largely himself, but took a pleasure in compelling others to do the same, until the royal banqueting-room became a scene of the most revolting debauchery and intoxication. But towards the close of life, his habits, when alone, were temperate even to abstemiousness. In his domestic relations he was far from happy. At the age of seventeen he married a Russian lady, named Eudoxia Lapouchin, whom he divorced in less than three years. According to some accounts, this separation was caused by her infidelities ; according to others, by her obstinate hostility to all his projects of improvement : a hostility inculcated and encouraged by the priesthood, in whose eyes all change was an abomination, and the worst of changes those made professedly in imitation of the barbarous nations inhabiting the rest of Europe. By her the Czar had one son, Alexis, heir to the throne ; who, under the guardianship of his weak and bigoted mother, grew up in the practice of all low debauchery, and with the same deference to the priesthood, and dislike to change, which had cost herself the society of her husband. The degeneracy of this, his eldest, and long his only son, was a serious affliction to Peter ; the more so, if he reflected justly, because he could not hold himself guiltless of it, in having intrusted the education of his legitimate successor to one, of whose incapacity for the charge he had ample proof. It appears from authentic documents that even so early as the battle of the Pruth, Peter had contemplated the necessity of excluding his son from the throne. In the close of the year 1716, he addressed a serious expostulation to Alexis, in which, after reviewing the errors of his past life, he declared his fixed intention of cutting off the prince from the succession, unless he should so far amend as to afford a reasonable hope of his reigning for the good of his people. He required him either to work a thorough reformation in his life and manners, or to retire to a monastery ; and allowed him six months to deliberate upon this alternative. At the end of the time

Alexis quitted Russia, under pretence of going to his father at Copenhagen; but instead of doing so he fled to Vienna. He was induced, however, to return by promises of forgiveness, mixed with threats in the event of his continued disobedience, and arrived at Moscow, February 13, 1718. On the following day the clergy, the chief officers of state, and the chief nobility were convened, and Alexis, being brought before them as a prisoner, acknowledged himself unworthy of the succession, which he resigned, entreating only that his life might be spared. A declaration was then read on the part of the Czar, reciting the various delinquencies of which his son had been guilty, and ending with the solemn exclusion of him from the throne, and the nomination of Peter, his own infant son by Catharine, as the future emperor. To this solemn act of renunciation Alexis set his hand. Thus far there is nothing to blame in the parent's conduct, unless it be considered that in the promise of forgiveness, a reservation of his son's hereditary right was implied. His subsequent conduct was severe, if not faithless. Not content with what had been done, Peter determined to extract from Alexis a full confession of the plans which he had entertained, and of the names of his advisers. For near five months the wretched young man was harassed by constant interrogatories, in his replies to which considerable prevarication took place. It was on the ground of this prevarication that, in July, 1718, the Czar determined to bring his son to trial. By the laws of Russia a father had power of life or death over his child, and the Czar absolute power over the lives of his subjects. Waving these rights, however, if such oppressive privileges deserve the name, he submitted the question to an assembly of the chief personages of the realm; and the document which he addressed to them on this occasion bears strong evidence to the honesty of his purpose, unfeeling as that purpose must appear. On July 5, that assembly unanimously pronounced Alexis worthy of death, and on the next day but one Alexis died. The manner of his death will never probably be entirely cleared up. Rumour of course attributed it to violence; but there are many circumstances which render this improbable. One argument against it is to be found in the character of Peter himself, who would hardly have hesitated to act this tragedy in the face of the world, had he thought it necessary to act it at all. Why he should have incurred the guilt of an action scarce one degree removed from midnight murder, when the object might have been effected by legal means, and the odium was already incurred, it is not easy to say. He courted publicity for his conduct, and submitted himself to the judgment of Europe, by causing the whole trial to be translated into several languages, and printed. His

own statement intimates that he had not intended to enforce the sentence; and proceeds to say that on July 6, Alexis, after having heard the judgment read, was seized by fits resembling apoplexy, and died the following day; having seen his father and received his forgiveness, together with the last rites of the Greek religion. This is the less improbable, because intemperance had injured the prince's constitution, and a tendency to fits was hereditary in the family.

If our sketch of the latter years of Peter's life appear meagre and unsatisfactory, it is to be recollected that the history of that life is the history of a great empire, which it would be vain to condense within our limits, were they greater than they are. Results are all that we are competent to deal with. From the peace of Nieustadt, the exertions of Peter, still unremitting, were directed more to consolidate and improve the internal condition of the empire, by watching over the changes which he had already made, than to effect farther conquests, or new revolutions in policy or manners. He died February 8, 1725, leaving no surviving male issue. Sometime before, he had caused the Empress Catharine to be solemnly crowned and associated with him on the throne, and to her he left the charge of fostering those schemes of civilization which he had originated.

Of the numerous works which treat wholly or in part of the history of Peter the Great, that of Voltaire, not the most trustworthy, is probably the most widely known. Fuller information will be found in the 'Journal de Pierre le Grand, écrit par lui-même ;' in the memoirs published under the name of Nestesuranoi, and the Anecdotes of M. Stæhlin. For English works, we may refer to Tooke's History of Russia, and the 'Life of Peter,' in the Family Library.



END OF VOL. II.











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